



NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc  
ABN 82 549 537 349

## **NSW CAG Position Statement**

### **Planning the Future of Callan Park**

Callan Park is a parkland covering 61 hectares on the shores of Iron Cove in Lillyfield, Sydney. It has a strong historical past as a site of mental health institutions, stemming back to as early as 1873. The whole idea of the site was to keep people who were mentally ill away from the public, providing them with a natural environment and place to go with the intention of curing their illness. The site (often referred to as a lunatic asylum and more recently known as Rozelle Hospital) has become an important and historic place for people with mental illness.

In April 2008, Rozelle hospital was closed and all of its services and current patients were transferred to Concord Hospital. This was in line with the belief that mental health hospitals need to be on the same sites as general hospitals. This decision has effectively ended the historic use of the site for psychiatric institutions and acute care. It has also left room to now make some important decisions about what the site can be used for.

Recently the Leichhardt Council engaged Professor Vaughan Carr to explore the options and develop a master plan for the future development and use of Callan Park. To see a discussion paper recently released by Prof. Carr go to:

<http://callanparkyourplan.com.au/downloads/discussion-papers/Discussion-Paper-Mental-Health.pdf>

Community workshops and forums have demonstrated strong community support for the site to remain relevant to mental health, with a focus on recovery, physical health and wellbeing. There is also support that the services at the site are accessible to the whole community. The current master plan proposes that part of the site be a statewide centre providing non-clinical recovery based services for mental health and wellbeing, including:

- Health and leisure services
- Vocational and social services
- Residential services
- Resource and information
- A learning centre – education, training and research (for mental health clinicians and service providers).



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NSW CAG is pleased to see that the master plan is moving in the direction of strengthening available community services for people with mental illness. We have been having conversations with Prof. Carr and engaging in community workshops to ensure that the interests of consumers are considered in developing the master plan.

In particular we have strongly supported that the site be used to support mental health and wellbeing. We have also advocated that:

- The site be about community and recovery
- There be a museum that captures the history of Callan Park and provides respectful remembrance of people who experienced institutionalisation there
- There be no hospital type services on the site
- The site provides services that consumers are asking for such as:
  - Non clinical mental health services
  - Step/up step down accommodation services
  - Physical health care
  - Vocational education and training
  - Resources and information support, including individual advocacy services
  - Leisure activities and peer support spaces
  - Training of consumer workers / peer workers
  - Training of clinicians in recovery based practice
  - Research into alternative therapies
- Processes for any governance of the site, panel or decision making regarding use of the site include representation of consumers of mental health services

NSW CAG does not support any form of service on site that is medical in its approach to mental health. Services need to be framed in a non clinical, recovery and community approach. NSW CAG made the following public statement:

*“The reestablishment of the Callan Park Site as a place focusing on mental health, wellness and recovery in the community is an exciting development that will benefit both mental health consumers and the broader community. In particular NSW CAG is pleased to see a genuine move away from the traditional focus on acute, crisis driven services, to the provision of accessible mental health and wellbeing options for people in the community.”*

Karen Oakley, Executive Officer, NSW CAG

For more information on the proposed master plan for Callan Park see:  
<http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Callan-park.html>

24<sup>th</sup> September 2010