



The NSW Consumer
Advisory Group - Mental
Health Inc.

Funded by NSW Health

NSW CAG INFO_LINK

NSW Consumer Advisory Group—Mental Health Inc. (NSW CAG)

December 2011

Issue 29

Points of interest:

- Read a summary of our latest submission. See page 10.
- Commissioners announced for the Mental Health Commission. See page 17
- Norman's Journey—from frustration to transformation. See page 21.
- NSW CAG invites you to have your say. See page 23

What's happening at NSW CAG?

NSW CAG organised two major events during these last months of 2011. The first during the Mental Health Month was the opening of NSW CAG's inaugural Recovery in Art Exhibition. (Page 11.)

The second event took place in November, with our 3rd Annual Forum. The focus of this year's forum was Trauma Informed Care. (Page 13.)

The MH-CoPES Framework continues to roll out across NSW. Action and Change is well and truly happening across the state. (Page 6.)

The Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce is now available for consultation. We would like you to provide your comments on this document. (Page 9.)

In October and November, NSW CAG supported two different inquiry processes. We assisted the NSW Ombudsman to run three focus groups designed to consult with people with complex needs who had recently been in a mental health inpatient unit. (Page 12.)

Inside this issue:

Chairperson's Report	2
Chief Executive Officer's Report	4
NSW CAG's Projects	6
NSW CAG's Submissions	10
Out in the Community	11
Mental Health Sector News	16
Recovery Story	21
Obituary	22
Have Your Say	23

Our vision is for all people with a lived experience of mental illness to be able to participate meaningfully in society and to experience fair access to quality recovery focused services which reflect their needs.

Chairperson's Report



Welcome to another edition NSW CAG Info_Link. It has been another exciting few months since our last edition with October being filled with Mental Health Month events capped off by our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and November being the month of our Annual Forums.

Our AGM, held on Monday 31st October, was both informative and fun. We were excited to have Mary O'Hagan open the evening with a presentation about Trauma Informed Care. Mary is a leading authority on the concept of recovery. Mary was engaging and provided the audience with some interesting ideas about Trauma Informed Practice and Services and how these relate to recovery, which were informed by her own experiences as a person with a lived experience of mental illness.

After our guest speaker, I provided my Chairperson's report and thanked everyone for coming to the AGM. The secretary Jenny MacKellin then presented the Financial Report. This was followed by our CEO Peri O'Shea's report. Peri also introduced a visual presentation of highlights of 2010/11 developed by CAG staff.

The new Board of Trustees were then elected and the official part of the AGM took place. After the official proceedings we all caught up over some lovely food at the Bayside Boulevard hotel.

Congratulations to all our new Board Members. The NSW CAG Board of Trustee members for 2011-12 are:

Allison Kokany -	Chairperson
Anne Francis -	Deputy Chair
Jenny Mackellin -	Secretary
Linda Hennessy -	Board Member
Tim Heffernan -	Board Member
Des Idiens -	Board Member
Mandy Miles -	Board Member
Gunter Koerner -	Board Member
Fay Jackson -	Board Member
Mark Soneveld -	Board Member
Warren Heggarty -	Board Member

A copy of our Annual Report is available at:

http://www.nswcag.org.au/files//about/2010-2011_annual_report_final.pdf

Allison Kokany
Chairperson



Members casting their votes at NSW CAG AGM



Allison Kokany (Convener) and Jenny Mackelin Convener (Secretary) at NSW CAG's AGM 2011

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Chief Executive Officer's Report



It has been another busy few months at NSW CAG since our last issue of Info-Link.

Some of the highlights are:

Recovery Forum: Trauma Informed Care

On November 15, 2011, NSW CAG hosted its 3rd Annual Recovery Forum at Wesley Conference Centre in Sydney. The Forum, a day-long event, explored the concept of 'trauma informed care.' A diverse group of approximately 70 people, including consumers, a range of service providers, government staff and academic researchers attended the event. The day offered participants with opportunities to hear from consumers, consumer workers and others about trauma informed care, how this is concept is related to personal recovery and how it can be translated into action at the policy and service delivery level. The feedback we received on the day was very positive and we look forward to future forums with an aim to hold two forums in 2012 (including one in a Regional area of NSW). For a full report on the Recovery Forum see page 13.

The Consumer Workers Annual Forum (CWF) and The Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce

The 2011 Consumer Workers' Annual Forum held at The Menzies Hotel Sydney on 18th November was a stimulating and inspiring day. 44 consumer workers attended the forum which is an impressive 76% of all NSW consumer workers. The Forum provided an opportunity for all NSW Consumer Workers to meet up, support and network with each other. Feedback from the day was overwhelming positive. For a full report on the 2011 Consumer Workers' Annual Forum see pages 7 - 8.

"Congratulations to Janet Meagher on her appointment as one of the National Mental Health Commissioners"

The afternoon of the 2011 Consumer Workers' Annual Forum was set aside for consultation on The Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce. This draft Framework provides a comprehensive guide to the employment of consumer workers and how to develop the consumer workforce. To make sure we get it right, the draft Framework is still open for consultation with the invitation for feedback extending to 20th January 2012. For more information on how you can provide feedback to this Framework go to page 9.

Launch of the NSW Mental Health Commission Bill

On the 24th of November 2011, Hon. Kevin Humphries, NSW Minister for Mental Health introduced a bill to parliament to set up the NSW Mental Health Commission (NSW MHC). This is an exciting time for NSW CAG and our stakeholders as a NSW MHC has the potential to significantly change the landscape for mental health consumers. We congratulate the NSW Government on the bill which incorporates most of the advice that we forwarded from consumers, including that one of the Commissioners have a lived experience of mental illness. NSW CAG was featured in an article published on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald on the 24th November titled "Mental health policy to be run by those who have fought the battle" which draw attention to this notable step forward in consumer participation and recognition. We congratulate Mr. Humphries, his team and the NSW government on the introduction of the bill and look forward to working together with them and consumers on developing the NSW MHC. For more information the NSW MHC go to page 16.

The Announcement of the Commissioners for the National Mental Health Commission

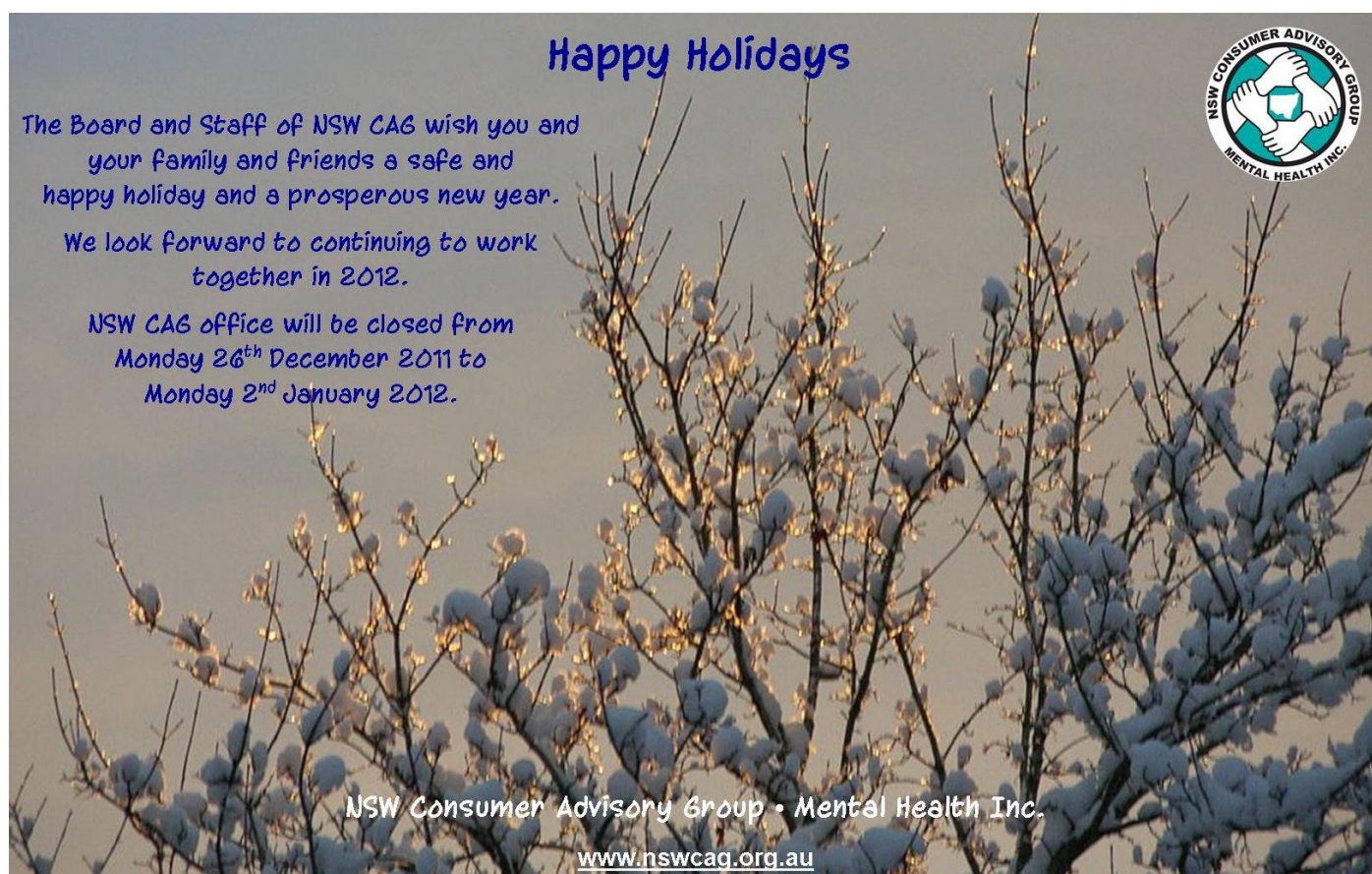
Also very exciting is the announcement of the appointment of Janet Meagher as one of the 8 National Mental Health Commissioners. Janet is a very strong consumer advocate, who is nationally and internationally recognised, while based in NSW.

Janet was also one of the founding members of NSW CAG; we are honoured to have this historical connection with Janet and look forward to working with her in her new role. For more information about Janet Meagher and the National MHC see page 17.

The Preliminary Report on MH-CoPES Action and Change

The Preliminary Report on MH-CoPES Action and Change in NSW Mental Health Services was launched and presented to Hon. Kevin Humphries, NSW Minister for Mental Health on Tuesday 20 December. This is a preliminary report on MH-CoPES' Action and Change in NSW Mental Health Services. The report provides a selection of examples to illustrate improvements occurring at a local level in individual mental health services, demonstrating the successes of the first year of the MH-CoPES' Framework. For more information on the Action and Change report see page 6.

Peri O'Shea
Chief Executive Officer




Happy Holidays

The Board and Staff of NSW CAG wish you and your family and friends a safe and happy holiday and a prosperous new year.

We look forward to continuing to work together in 2012.

NSW CAG office will be closed from Monday 26th December 2011 to Monday 2nd January 2012.



NSW Consumer Advisory Group • Mental Health Inc.
www.nswcag.org.au

Our vision is for all people with a lived experience of mental illness to be able to participate meaningfully in society and to experience fair access to quality recovery focused services which reflect their needs.

NSW CAG's Projects



The Mental Health - Consumer Perception Experience of Services (MH-CoPES)

The MH-CoPES Framework continues to roll out across NSW. As reported in the last newsletter Action and Change is well and truly happening across the state. Action and Change means that services are acting on the feedback from MH-CoPES questionnaires and making changes to better their service. Many services are now implementing the improvement strategies which consumers and staff of their service devised together.

We are very happy to report that 104 individual mental health services across NSW participated in distributing the MH-CoPES questionnaires in the first half of the first year of the MH-CoPES Framework. This represents approximately 26% of the total number of mental health services in NSW.

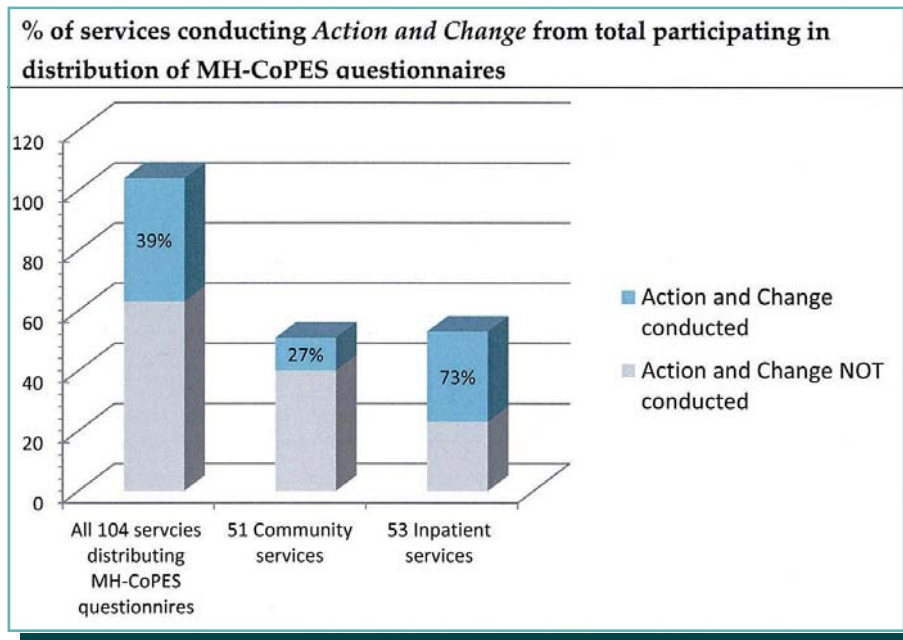
The 104 participating services were made up of 53 inpatient services and 51 community services. Of the 104, a total of 41 services (39%) conducted Action and Change.

These included:

- 30 of 53 inpatient services
- 11 of 51 community services

As part of Action and Change, so far over 100 strategies for service improvements have been developed by consumers and staff working together at a local level in individual services.

To learn more about Action and Change and to see real examples of improvements happening across the state download The Preliminary Report on MH-CoPES Action and Change in NSW Mental Health Services from the NSW CAG website.



As the roll out continues we look forward to more services being involved.



Consumer Workers' Forum Project Stage 2 Update

2011 Consumer Workers' Annual Forum

We are very happy to report that the 2011 Consumer Workers' Annual Forum held at The Menzies Hotel Sydney on 18th November, was a great success.

The Consumer Workers' Annual Forum provides an opportunity for all NSW Consumer Workers to meet up, discuss their work and network with each other. The day included professional development provided by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health around 'Using your personal story as an advocacy tool in the media'. The day also included a thought provoking and challenging consultation, facilitated by NSW CAG staff which saw all participants having an opportunity to comment on and provide their thoughts and ideas on the *Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce*.



Draft Framework presentation by Karen Oakley

The forum welcomed the Director of the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, David McGrath as a special guest speaker. David inspired the audience speaking on the mental health commission and giving honest and frank answers to range of questions.

The day concluded with '1 minute with Mic' (1 minute with the microphone) which saw attendees sharing and celebrating their inspiring achievements of the last year with their colleagues across the state. One consumer worker said '1 minute with Mic' was a

"Great idea and humbling to hear others stories of their achievements – thank you"

NSW CAG's Projects (continued...)

NSW CAG would like to formally thank all those who attended and facilitated the day. Forty-four consumer workers attended the forum which is a staggering 76% of all NSW consumer workers; it was a stimulating and inspiring day. We would also like to extend special thanks to the Consumer Workers' Forum Organising Committee for their efforts.



Group photo of all participants on the CWF Annual Forum 2011

Feedback from the day was overwhelming positive. When asked what they found most useful about the day, one participant said

"Moving in a positive and challenging way on uncharted waters"

While another stated that they most enjoyed

"The ability to be heard and documented [by participating in the consultation, and]... to be directly involved in changes to be made for the future"



Support and development



Participants working hard

Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce

The Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce is now available for consultation. If you would like to provide your comments on this document, please see below information for ways in which you can do this.

Please note: In order to comment on the Framework or input into the below surveys you will need to read the:

- **Final Consultation Paper. Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce (NSW CAG, 2011).**

This document can be downloaded from the NSW CAG website at the following link

http://www.nswcag.org.au/files/our_work/projects/final_consultation_paper.pdf

(The Framework is detailed between pages 6 and 52, with the remaining pages containing the Appendices.)

Feedback on the Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce can be provided via the following mechanisms:

1. Consultation questions and comments can be completed online at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/THE_JOB
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SUPPORT_AND_DEVELOPMENT
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/THE_SYSTEM
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/THE_PROFESSION
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/THE_WHOLE_FRAMEWORK
2. Notes and comments can be
 - a. Emailed to: karen.oakley@nswcag.org.au
 - b. Faxed to: C/-Consumer Worker Draft Framework (02) 9332 0299
 - c. Mailed to: C/- Consumer Worker Draft Framework, NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. Suite 501, 80 William St East Sydney NSW 2011
3. Consultation questions and comments can be answered on a Word version of the consultation questions available via NSW CAG's website and returned as above
4. Notes and comments can be made on a printed version of the *Final Consultation Paper. Draft Framework for the NSW Health Consumer Workforce* (NSW CAG, 2011) and returned as above

NB. Feedback on this consultation paper is due by close of business Friday 20th January 2012.

NSW CAG Info_Link—Subscribe Now!

If you wish to receive a printed copy of Info_Link, you are invited to subscribe to the post list for a small annual subscription fee of \$22 per year (including GST).

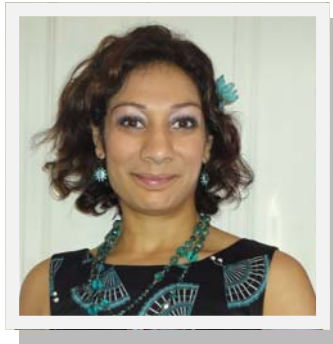
To subscribe to receive a printed copy of Info_Link visit our website www.nswcag.org.au and go to OUR WORK section and click on the NEWSLETTER page to access the online subscription form.

For more information contact us by phone on (02) 9332-0200 or by email info@nswcag.org.au.



Enhancing Consumer Participation Project

Introducing Reena Masrani, Senior Policy Officer- Participation and Community Development Advisor



NSW CAG would like to introduce our newest member of staff, Reena Masrani. Reena is working on a project to enhance consumer participation in NSW Health. A key part of the project is working closely with the Mental Health Consumer Sub-Committee to the Program Council. This committee is the key governance structure used by NSW Health to involve mental health consumers in decisions made in all aspects of the planning, delivery and evaluation of mental health delivery. Consumer members on this committee act as representative for various groups such as consumers from CALD backgrounds, consumers in the NGO sector, young consumers, consumers in the forensic mental health system, Aboriginal consumers, and consumers not presently employed in a permanent consumer position.

Reena will be supporting members of this committee with their feedback on draft policy and any other issues they wish to raise. She will be involved with helping members to continue to develop strategies to engage with their networks on issues that come before the Consumer Sub-Committee for discussion. She will also be providing advice on how to increase and promote participation activities with consumers.

Reena is originally from London and has a background in psychology and research. She has worked as a consultant managing social research, and consultancy projects in areas such as parenting and childcare, services for families and young children, educational attainment, young people and their use of social media, and food safety. A large part of some of these projects explored how services could be made more accessible and inclusive and be promoted. This included research with service users exploring how they made decisions on what support and services they used and what they would like, as well as engaging with service providers to understand any of the challenges they faced when delivering services. Reena has experience in consulting with children and young people, parents, hard to reach groups (e.g. asylum seekers and refugees, individuals in supported accommodation, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) as well as decision makers and health and education professionals.

Reena says that she is very excited to be working at on this project at NSW CAG, and she is looking forward to working with the Consumer Sub Committee to Program Council as well as CAG's members.

"It's only 1/100th of me" - Anti-stigma DVD Order your copy now!

People living with mental illness regularly identify that stigma and discrimination urgently needs to change. NSW CAG works to present positive, real stories of people living with mental illness and seek commitment from policy and decision makers to address these issues within the community and mental health services.

NSW CAG's DVD titled "Its only 1/100th of me": Stories of 6 People Challenging Stigma and Discrimination Surrounding Mental Illness, is an ongoing anti-stigma and anti-discrimination campaign surrounding mental illness. Over the years we have encourage organisations to use it as an education and anti-stigma tool.

You can get a copy for only \$15.00 each, including GST and postage.

To order the DVD online go to www.nswcag.org.au/page/current_projects.html and click on the link to the order form, or contact us on 9332 0200 to order your copy.

Working together with NSW Health to improve service delivery

In the past few months, NSW CAG has given feedback to NSW Health on a number of policy issues, including:

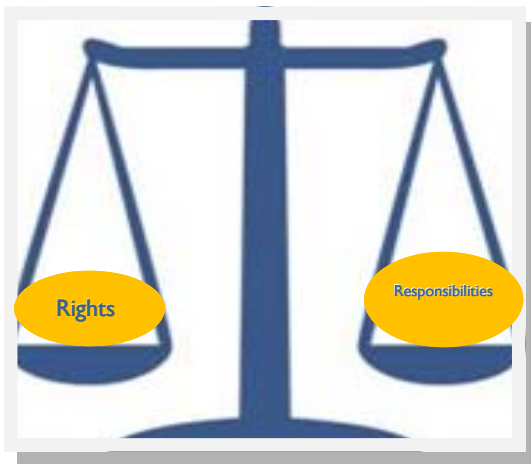
- personal and sexual safety and security in mental health services;
- transfer of care from mental health services;
- discharge from emergency department;
- animal visitation; and
- specialist mental health services for older people.



Insights gained from various consultations with consumers informed NSW CAG's feedback on these issues. For example, consumers often tell us that services need to genuinely engage consumers in their decision-making. In our feedback to NSW Health, we consistently advocated for greater commitment to consumer involvement and participation. We identified and made recommendations on areas where consumer participation can be embedded into policy.

NSW CAG thanks NSW Health for inviting our feedback. In particular, we thank all the consumers who, over the years, had shared their experiences and insights with us.

Review of the National Mental Health Statement of Rights and Responsibilities



In September, NSW CAG submitted feedback on the draft of the updated *Mental Health Statement of Rights and Responsibilities (the Statement)*.

Developed in 1991, the purpose of the *Statement* was to ensure that consumers, support persons, service providers and communities were aware of their rights and responsibilities. Although the *Statement* is still a very important document, it no longer reflects the contemporary understanding about mental health care and human rights, and so it was time for an update.

The review was undertaken by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council. The purpose of the review was not to redevelop the entire *Statement*, but to update particular aspects, such as the structure of the document and its language, to bring it in line with the existing laws, concepts and understanding about mental health and human rights.

NSW CAG's submission provided feedback and recommendations on specific aspects of the *Statement*, including the structure of the document, ease of use, level of accessibility and the need for wider promotion of the *Statement* to improve awareness. The submission was informed by the feedback from those who took part in our online survey regarding the draft *Statement* and also by the insights gained from other consultations with consumers.

To read the submission, go to:

http://www.nswcag.org.au/files//our_work/submissions/nsw_cag_submission_revised_mental_health_statement_of_rights_and_responsibilities_final.pdf

Consultations supported: Mental Health Discharge Planning and Community Support and Mental Health Inquiry System

In October and November, NSW CAG supported two different inquiry processes; one with NSW Ombudsman and the other with NSW Health

We assisted the NSW Ombudsman to run three focus groups designed to consult with people with complex needs who had recently been in a mental health inpatient unit.

This was part of an inquiry set up to consider the roles and responsibilities of both Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) and NSW Health in the provision of services for mental health inpatients who are not being discharged due to a lack of community based support and accommodation options, in the context of the *Disability Services Act 1993*.



The inquiry aimed to:

- understand the prevalence and profile of mental health inpatients that remain admitted due to a lack of available community based support and accommodation services (the client group);
- analyse the roles and responsibilities of ADHC and NSW Health in providing services to the client group, both in a legislative and policy context;
- understand the range of available community based support and accommodation options for the client group provided by ADHC and NSW Health;
- analyse any blockages and gaps that may be contributing to the continued admission of the client group;
- understand the issue of continued admission of the client group in the context of the broader mental health service system; and
- identify potential service models and agency roles that may improve support for and the situation for the client group.

The inquiry is to consider the roles and responsibilities of both Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) and NSW Health in the provision of services for mental health inpatients who are not being discharged due to a lack of community based support and accommodation options.

The information collected from the focus groups will be analysed and incorporated into the final report and the inquiry should be completed by early 2012. NSW CAG understands that the NSW Ombudsman will be submitting the report to the NSW Parliament.

We will be sure to give you an update when the report has been released.

NSW CAG would like to give a big thank you to all the services that helped us promote the focus groups, in particular, the three services that hosted the focus groups: New Horizon at Miller; Fernhill Place at Fairy Meadow; and Wayside Chapel Day to Day Living Program. We would also like to thank all the individuals who volunteered their time to participate in the focus groups.

NSW Health is also undertaking an evaluation of the Mental Health Inquiry System. The review is being conducted by an external and independent team of researchers. The researchers have been meeting with various stakeholders and had an online survey for people to share their views about what was positive and negative about the Inquiry System. NSW CAG was asked to support greater consumer participation in this project by promoting a consultation, which was held at NSW CAG's office in November 2011. NSW CAG will keep you updated as to the final results and recommendations of the evaluation and thanks all consumers and organisations who supported this event.

NSW CAG's 2011 Annual Recovery Forum

Another very successful Annual Recovery Forum was held by NSW CAG on the 15th November at Wesley Mission Conference Centre, and this year's focus was Trauma Informed Care and Recovery. The event was attended by a diverse group of approximately 70 people, including consumers, a range of service providers, government staff and academic researchers. Dr Peri O'Shea, NSW CAG's Chief Executive Officer, opened the Forum and spoke about why NSW CAG is looking at the issue of trauma informed care. Peri said that the issue of trauma was one that kept coming up in during NSW CAG's consultations.

The keynote speaker was Dr Cathy Kezelman of ASCA (Adults Surviving Child Abuse), who spoke about Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and her own experiences. Dr Kezelman expressed her knowledge clearly and sensitively, effectively communicating TIC principles and why TIC is vital in mental health service delivery. Participants also heard from a panel of people who spoke about TIC from their own perspectives as consumers, service providers and researcher.

The afternoon was dedicated to workshops about trauma informed care. Four different workshops were held with two sessions each, allowing everyone a choice of two activities. One workshop was an interactive session facilitated by *Milk Crate Theatre*, who performed a couple of scenarios and then teased out the audience's response about how to implement TIC to improve the outcome. Another workshop was a round table discussion about strategies and barriers to implementing TIC based on a case study. A third workshop was held to look at what role NSW CAG can play in promoting TIC in the future, and what directions NSW CAG might take in 2012. All these sessions were lively and productive, while the last workshop aimed to calm and settle the body and mind through Tai Chi, by providing a program of gentle movements led by an experienced Tai Chi instructor.

Feedback from the Recovery Forum was very positive and optimistic, and participants welcomed the opportunity to network and learn. NSW CAG has collected some very constructive comments to inform its future policy on TIC. For those unable to attend the Forum, an online discussion space on NSW CAG's website will be devoted to continue exploring some of the themes that came out of the day.



Dr Cathy Kezelman



Ken Zulumovski and panel



Audience



Registration Time



Leticia Funston and panel



Tai Chi workshop

Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing in Mental Health Month

During October, NSW CAG took part in three Mental Health Month events. NSW CAG held stalls in Parramatta, Martin Place and Miller Square, and met with members of each local community as well as service providers

This year's theme for Mental Health Month was 'Wellbeing: Invest in Your Life', which promoted a holistic view of health and wellbeing. It recognised that a person's overall health encompasses a number of dimensions, such as mental health, physical health, social health and spiritual health, and that all of these should be looked after to enable the person to live a happy and fulfilling life.

All three events attracted a lot of interests. We were very excited to have spoken with so many people and to have been able to promote our work to the wider community. NSW CAG would like to thank everyone who came along, met with us and shared with us their experience and stories. We would also like to thank the event organisers who invited us to take part at their event.

Mary O'Hagan Workshop: Trauma Informed Care and Recovery



Mary O'Hagan workshop presentation

The relationship between trauma and recovery was the subject of a recent half day workshop presented to NSW CAG staff and members by Mary O'Hagan on 31 October.

Known as an international leader and innovator in mental health, in her late teens and early 20's Mary used mental health services in New Zealand and has since used her experience to improve the mental health system both in New Zealand and at the international level. Among her many credentials, Mary was a Mental Health Commissioner for New Zealand and an advisor to the United Nations and World Health Organisation.

Mary's presentation for NSW CAG focused on the links between trauma informed care and recovery. She explained that 50% to 90% of people who use mental health services have trauma histories, thus in order to facilitate mental health recovery, services need to become trauma informed. She drew a comparison between 'traditional services' and 'recovery-based

services' which are trauma informed.

Mary defined the key principles of trauma informed services as services that are designed to be trauma sensitive:

- Assumption that people who use services are likely to have experienced trauma.
- Thorough screening for trauma.
- Understanding of the profound biological, psychological and social effects of trauma.
- Assist healing through collaboration and refrain from responses that (re)trigger trauma

Services need to understand the symptoms of mental illness within the context of the individual's experience, including their trauma history, and how to respond to trauma survivors appropriately. Mary also stressed the importance for services to create an environment of safety, trust and respect, and to avoid practices that may re-traumatise an individual.

50% to 90% of people who use mental health services have trauma histories, thus in order to facilitate mental health recovery, services need to become trauma informed

NSW CAG thanks Mary for sharing her insights with us and we also thank those of our members who joined us in this special workshop.

Inaugural *Recovery in Art* Exhibition



Dr. Peri O'Shea, NSW CAG's CEO introducing the Hon. Kevin Humphries MP, Minister for Mental Health

Mental Health Month 2011 was celebrated by NSW CAG with a thought-provoking art exhibition at the Pine Street Creative Arts Centre in Chippendale between 20th to 28th October. The exhibition was opened by the NSW Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Kevin Humphries MP, to a large crowd of invited guests and visitors. Thirty artworks were shown, and they attracted strong praise from those who attended.

Art is seen as a way for people to express themselves and also a way to tell their stories. This collection celebrated each individual's interpretation of their own passage of recovery through their art. Visitors' responses to the work were positive and affirming. Some wrote of sharing the artist's experience of recovery through art, and others noted that they found the works inspirational and moving. One visitor said they realized they 'were not alone', through interpreting a common symbolic journey of recovery which others had depicted in the exhibition.

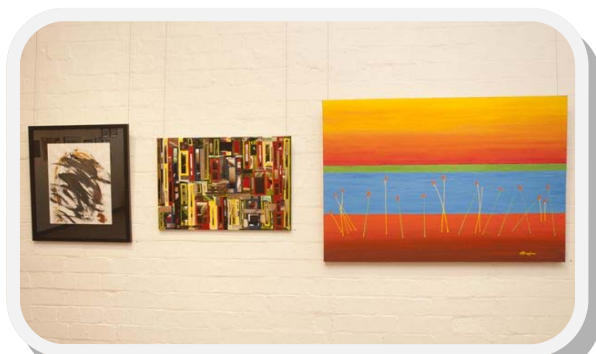
Although the paintings were not advertised for sale, numerous requests resulted in several sales, while some artists preferred not to sell. The range of interest generated proved the high regard for the artwork shown.

Plans are in place to make this an annual event.

NSW CAG would like to thank the City of Sydney, Pine Street Gallery and NSW Health for their assistance in making this exhibition such a success.

Special thanks go to all the artists who contributed their work and who shared their personal journey.

Photos of the artwork will be available very shortly on our website.



"I hope that they can be an inspiration to others. Art is very therapeutic."
Anne Naylor



"My best friend 'Huan Huan' in Chinese it means Happy"



Invitees at the Inaugural Recovery in Art Exhibition 2011



Paintings by Dale

Gaining a cross-sectoral understanding on trauma informed care

In early December, Tara Dias and Ka Ki Ng from the NSW CAG Policy Team were invited as guests to a forum hosted by NADA (network of alcohol & other drugs agencies). NADA is the peak organisation for the non-government drug and alcohol sector in NSW. This forum looked at the relevance of trauma informed care (TIC) to the alcohol & other drugs (AOD) sector.

The day opened with a panel consisting of a consumer representative, researchers, AOD service providers and a representative from the Mental Health Coordinating Council. The panel discussed the challenges of implementing trauma informed care as well as the difficulties faced by consumers who needed support from both the mental health and the AOD sector. The consumer representative in particular spoke about the importance of services to involve consumers in decisions making, whether that be decisions to do with broader issues such as service design, or issues such as individual care and treatment.

The Forum also showcased several engaging speakers including Judy Atkinson who presented on "Aboriginal peoples and generational trauma: a trauma informed response to substance misuse." Judy spoke about the importance that stories played in an individual's and community's recovery process. She said that in Aboriginal cultures stories are essential and that 'to know your story is to know who you are.'

Amos Hee from the Buttery at Far North Coast NSW gave a very interesting talk about the different meanings the word 'trauma' has had throughout history. He explained that the meaning of 'trauma' had always reflected society's understanding about human suffering and shaped the way we respond to people who are suffering.

Another interesting presentation was given by Julia Douglas of the Indigo Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative in Victoria. This initiative started in 2004 and plays a course coordination role for people who have complex needs and who live in areas where service systems are unable to provide adequate support. The program links individuals with services as well as assist services to provide support to consumers with complex needs.

NSW CAG congratulates NADA for a very successful forum and looks forward to opportunities to work on some of the cross-sectoral issues raised at the forum.

Mental Health Sector News

NSW Mental Health Commission (NSW MHC)

On Thursday 24th November 2011, the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Kevin Humphries MP introduced the NSW Mental Health Commission Bill 2011 into NSW Parliament.

In introducing this Bill, the Minister stated that the State Government wished to deliver a commitment "to establish an independent Mental Health Commission that will be a champion for mental health, ensure better accountability of mental health services and the use of mental health funds, and nurture innovation in our approach to mental health". (NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard 24/11/2011)

"I am proud to have introduced the Mental Health Commission Bill 2011 to Parliament on 24 November, which clearly delivers on the Government's commitment to establish an independent Mental Health Commission that will be a champion for mental health, ensure better accountability of mental health services and the use of mental health funds, and nurture innovation in our approach to mental health.

"I believe this will be one of the most important mental health reforms in the history of New South Wales" said Minister Humphries.

According to Minister Humphries; "The Bill sets out the internal structures, principles, functions and powers that will govern the work of the Mental Health Commission. It also sets out responsibilities that will apply to the range of government agencies providing services that people with mental illness, their families and carers want to use. The

Bill makes the Mental Health Commission an integral part of enhancing mental health outcomes in this State. (Newsletter: *Further Update on the Development of a Mental Health Commission for NSW* December 2011).

We and our members and network made a significant contribution to the consultation process which has informed the structure and roles of the commission by facilitating and championing the views of people with a lived experience of mental illness to be heard and considered.

“Importantly, the key messages from the community and stakeholder consultations were heard and captured within the Bill. The views of community members, stakeholders and other experts have been essential to ensure that as many issues and concerns as possible of relevance to the Mental Health Commission's establishment were identified and considered. As a result the Bill establishes a Mental Health Commission that, in addition to the attributes listed above, includes in its leadership someone who has or has had mental illness.” (Newsletter: *Further Update on the Development of a Mental Health Commission for NSW* December 2011).

We support the Bill and see it as an excellent opportunity for real positive change to policy and services for the benefit of people with a lived experience of mental illness.

It is expected that this legislation will be debated in the Parliament in early February next year.

Commissioners announced for New Mental Health Commission

NSW CAG wishes to pass on our congratulations to Janet Meagher, for her appointment of Commissioner to the Federal Mental Health Commission.

Ms. Janet Meagher AM is currently the Divisional Manager of Inclusion for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia. She is a representative of the Consumers' Health Forum of Australia and a founding member of the NSW CAG. Ms Meagher has been a mental health consumer activist and advocate for almost 30 years. She has lived with schizophrenia since the early 1970's. Ms Meagher was a Churchill Fellow in 1994, and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1996.

Janet has a broad experience at national level including the inaugural (Consumer) Co-chairperson of NCCF (2002-2004), has had extensive national involvements in past 15 years and international consumer involvements for the past 10 years.

Janet has a personal commitment to genuine consumer/carer participation and partnerships. She holds a strong ethical and informed views and is linked firmly to a range of consumer constituencies who constantly educate and update her on their issues and opinions. We look forward to continuing to work with Janet in her new role as one of the National Mental Health Commissioners.

We also wish to extend our congratulations to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mr Mark Butler for his appointment of Janet Meagher as a Commissioner

We also wish to extend our congratulations to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mr Mark Butler for his appointment of Janet Meagher as a Commissioner.

Mr Butler, announced the appointment of the Mental Health Commissioners to Australia's first National Mental Health Commission (MHC) on 11th December 2011.

The eight Commissioners bring together a wide range of skills and experience, including from consumer and carer groups, community and social services, mental health and suicide prevention, Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing and academia.

“The appointment of the eight Commissioners, alongside the Chair, Professor Allan Fels AO and CEO, Ms Robyn Kruk AM, represents the next major milestone in national mental health reform,” Mr Butler said.

The eight Commissioners are: Mr Peter Bicknell, Ms Jackie Crowe, Dr Pat Dudgeon, Professor Ian Hickie AM, Mr Rob Knowles AO, Ms Janet Meagher AM, Ms Samantha Mostyn; and Professor Ian Webster AO.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Commission, Ms Robyn Kruk AM will also be an ex-officio Commissioner.

NSW CAG also wish to congratulate Minister Butler on his elevation to Cabinet Minister as the Minister for Mental Health and extend our congratulations to the Prime Minister, Ms Julia Gillard, for her appreciation the significance and importance of the role of this Ministry.

The biographies of the other seven commissioners are below:

Mr. Peter Bicknell

Mr. Bicknell is currently the Chair of UnitingCare Australia. He is also the Chair of UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide, Portway Housing Association and Adelaide Brighton Cement Community Liaison Group. Mr Bicknell has also served as the Chair of the Council for the Care of Children, was the Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide for ten years and has previously worked for the Department for Family and Community Services in Director roles.

Ms. Jackie Crowe

Ms. Crowe works with Ballarat Health Services Area Mental Health Service as a Carer Consultant and is a carer member of the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives. Ms. Crowe is ensuring that family/carer perspectives critically inform and enhance decision-making in service provision, policy, and evaluation at local, state and national levels.

Dr. Pat Dudgeon

Dr. Dudgeon is the Chair of Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA); a member of the Indigenous Strategies Working Group; a Research Fellow and Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia; and a member of the Mental Health Expert Working Group. Dr Dudgeon is from the Bardi people of the Kimberley. She is a psychologist and is known for her leadership in Indigenous higher education and is currently the Head of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

Professor Ian Hickie AM

Professor Hickie is the Executive Director of the Brain & Mind Research Institute (BMRI) at the University of Sydney, a position he has held since 2003 when the BMRI was first established as a flagship. He is recognised for his extensive knowledge and experience in early detection and treatment of depressive disorders. Professor Hickie is one of the first round of National Health and Medical Research Council Australian Fellows; recognising excellence in Australian Medical Research, appointed for the period from 2008-2013.

Mr. Rob Knowles

Mr. Knowles is a farmer and company director. He has been Chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia since April 2006. Mr Knowles is: a member of the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission; Chair of the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia; Chair of the Royal Children's Hospital Campus Council; and a member of the Board of the Brotherhood of St Lawrence. He is a former Victorian Minister of Health, Housing and Aged Care and has a strong interest in services for consumers and their families and carers.

Ms. Sam Mostyn

Ms. Mostyn is currently the Director of the Institute for Sustainable Solutions at the University of Sydney. In this role she is responsible for building collaborative and cross disciplinary projects involving research excellence on a number of sustainability topics. In September 2010 Ms Mostyn was appointed a Non-Executive Director of the Virgin Blue Board. Previously she held senior executive positions with Insurance Australia Group (IAG), Optus Communications and Cable & Wireless Plc in London, and was a policy advisor to two Federal Communications Ministers and the Prime Minister Paul Keating.

Professor Ian Webster

Professor Webster is a physician and Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales and Patron of the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia. He has held senior appointments in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of New South Wales and appointments at Monash, Sheffield and Sydney Universities. He is Chair of the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation; the Governing Council of the Ted Noffs Foundation and; the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity at the University of New South Wales. Professor Webster is also a member of the National Advisory Council on Suicide Prevention and the Australian National Council on Drugs.

New position statement on psychosocial disability

The National Consumer and Carer Forum has released a position statement called *Unravelling Psychosocial Disability*. The paper describes psychosocial disability as the disability that is associated with living with a severe mental health condition. Not all people who have a mental health condition will experience a psychosocial disability. Examples of psychosocial disability include loss of or reduced ability to function, think clearly, experience full physical health and capacity to manage the social and emotional aspects of one's life. The position paper also explains that psychosocial disability differs from the term psychiatric disability because it 'places an emphasis on the social consequences of disability whereas psychiatric disability focuses on the medically defined illness or impairment.'

The position paper stresses that impairments haven't always been well understood and as a result they have not always been acknowledged or addressed properly

The term psychosocial disability is much wider than other definitions of disability which may only relate to mobility, self care and communication and takes into account what supports an individual needs to fully and effectively participate in the community. Some people with a mental illness may experience impairments in physical and cognitive functioning. The position paper stresses that impairments haven't always been well understood and as a result they have not always been acknowledged or addressed properly. For example, low mood and decreased motivation are sometimes viewed as laziness or being uncooperative. *Unravelling Psychosocial Disability* makes a number of recommendations around supports that should be available to people (including housing and employment services); the need for the Australian Government to enhance their social inclusion agenda; the necessity to obtain high quality data on the prevalence of psychosocial disability; the need for training for those who work in disability support services on psychosocial disability and many others.

If you wish to reach the whole report, please go to:

http://www.nmhccf.org.au/documents/NMHCCF_Psychosocial%20disability_Booklet_Web%20version_27Oct11.pdf

Become a member of NSW CAG today!

If you are not already a member of NSW CAG, we are inviting our **Network NSW** subscribers to apply for membership to the organisation. There is no joining fee and membership is for 3 years.

As a member of NSW CAG you will continue to receive our fortnightly **E-News**, and online quarterly newsletter **Info Link**.

As a member of NSW CAG, additional benefits include more opportunities to involve you in the organisation, including special invitations to participate in the many forums, consultations and other events we hold each year.

Becoming a member gives you a voice in NSW CAG, by helping the organisation to determine its strategic goals, directions and priorities. Being a member you also have the opportunity to attend the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meetings.

When you have been a member for more than 6 months, you will also be entitled to:

- * Nominate yourself as a Trustee to the NSW CAG Board of Trustees when positions become available
- * Vote at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings
- * Vote in new Trustees to the NSW CAG Board

To apply for your free membership today visit www.nswcag.org.au and go to the Get Involved Section and then to the Membership to NSW CAG page.

New research: understanding the needs of people living with a psychotic condition



The Australian Government has undertaken a second national survey to receive updated information from people living with a psychotic condition who receive public specialised mental health services. The survey is based on a random sample of almost 2,000 people who have schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorders, bipolar affective disorder with psychotic symptoms or other similar conditions. The survey gathered a wide range of information from consumers and asked questions about symptoms, age of onset, family relationships, education and employment, physical health, services people used, and housing.

Since 1997-98 when the first survey was conducted, the following changes have been noted:

- an increase in people reporting 'good recovery,' from 21.3% in 1997 to 29.3% in 2010
- an increase in people living in their own home, rental accommodation or supported accommodation and a decrease in the number of people who experienced homelessness in the previous 12 months
- increases in the number of people who were accessing support in the community from non-government organisations.

To read the full report of People living with Psychotic Illnesses 2010, go to: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr11-mb-mb218.htm>

Holiday season expectations



The end of year holiday season can be a difficult and lonely period for some, and our media driven society imposes expectations of heightened levels of happiness that may be unreasonable and artificial. It is important to keep a broader perspective as Christmas approaches. By using good management techniques, some of the pressure can be avoided or minimised, and there are many helpful tips available.

Some of the most useful are to try to be moderate, stay within a budget, and remember that it is only one brief period in a whole year, over in a few days.

By talking about expectations of gift giving, costs, family meals, visits and delegation of jobs, etc. some potential tension may be avoided. Of course not everyone has family, and friends can be very happy to get together instead. Some people prefer to ignore seasonal festivities altogether and this is fine too. Try not to worry over what in time may seem unimportant and even trivial. Aim to reduce stress, relax, and look after yourself.

Here are some helpful websites to visit for ideas on ways to manage the festive season:

- ✓ http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Christmas_tips_to_reduce_the_stress
- ✓ <http://salvos.org.au/christmas/helpful-tips/stress-free-christmas.php>
- ✓ <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2011/11/14/3364563.htm>

Norman's Journey – from frustration to transformation

Norman is a consumer who has worked to educate health professionals in his community about mental illness. He has presented at the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses National Conference and is a facilitator in a peer support group. In speaking to him, it is evident that he's committed and passionate about improving mental health services, challenging negative attitudes and reducing isolation for people with a mental illness.

Norman says that he hasn't always been motivated to be this involved in his community. In previous years he said that he felt very isolated and was stuck in the 'revolving door' of being in and out of hospital frequently.

After one particularly bad time, about a year and a half ago, Norman came to the realisation that he'd had enough. Intensely frustrated by the mental health system, he realised that he wasn't getting the type of support he needed. He managed to turn things around by accessing what he describes as a range of 'holistic' supports. Some of the supports that have helped his recovery process are being able to access a psychologist and the support that he's received through Greenacres Disability Services, where he is employed.



Greenacres Disability Services supports approximately 1,000 people with disabilities in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. 220 of these people have employment at Greenacres Industries which is an Australian Disability Enterprise. Over the past few years, the organisation noticed that there was an increasing number of employees who had a mental illness. Staff noticed that mental health consumers at Greenacres had a range of skills and strengths but that staff required different types of support to utilise their skills in the workplace. With support from the former Area Health Service (now known as Local Health Districts), Greenacres established a peer support group called the Better Days Program.

Norman says that he hasn't always been motivated to be this involved in his community. In previous years he said that he felt very isolated and was stuck in the 'revolving door' of being in and out of hospital frequently

In addition to support available from case workers and the Better Days Program, employees are able to access the services of a Clinical Psychologist and support from Mental Health Nurses from the Illawarra Division of General Practice. In 2010, Greenacres and the Illawarra Division of General Practice received the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses / Eli Lilly - Partnership in Wellbeing Award for the best mental health program in recognition of the contribution of the Better Days Program.

As one of the facilitators in the Better Days Program, Norman says that the process of becoming a facilitator has been both 'a little bit confronting and enlightening.' He says that the support and respect that he's received from his peers in the program has been powerful. He's also had very positive feedback from the speeches he's given to health professionals, a process he describes as 'very liberating' as he's helping to change a system that he says has discriminated against him.

Norman says that there are numerous features of the mental health system that need to be fixed. He says that the system is overly reliant on hospitals. Continued investment in acute and crisis services have made the system skewed so people can't access enough supports in the community, which would help people to avoid hospitalisation. He is also frustrated by how the sector often doesn't look at an individual's issues instead they focus on the mental illness and the symptoms. Norman says he wants mental health services to be more holistic in their approach and that he's passionate about the need for health professionals to look at people's issues behind their illness.

Father Con Keogh – An amazing legacy



NSW CAG would like to extend condolences to all the people that have been touched by Father Keogh's kindness and pay tribute to his amazing work and the legacy he leaves behind.

Grow would like to honour the outstanding contribution to of Fr Con Keogh, who died aged 90 on Wednesday 23rd November, for his pioneering work in mental health recovery which began in 1957, and for the establishment of Grow nationally and internationally.

Con was born on July 13, 1921 in Maldon, Victoria and at age 18 he entered the Springwood seminary. After only 18 months he was selected to continue his studies in Rome, where he was ordained. He studied in Belgium receiving the doctorate of philosophy at the University of Louvain. He returned home in 1951, after 11 years away, and he became Professor of Philosophy at Springwood. He also taught at the Manly seminary.

His mental breakdown came in 1954 and he was certified insane, hospitalized for several months, and incapacitated for his work as a priest for almost a year. During his hospitalisation, he endured regular shock treatment with no anaesthesia, which he said left him "shattered, unable to remember, and still very disturbed, stunned and mortally afraid".

Following his discharge from the hospital, he sort help with his rehabilitation, but at that time there was incredible stigma around mental illness and community services, particularly those that focused on recovery from mental illness, were non existent.

He found help by attending meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, though not an alcoholic himself.

Along with a small number of others whom he met at these meetings and who had also experienced mental health problems, the idea was born of a special group to work specifically on the problems related to recovery from mental illness.

He was thus a member of the first Grow group (or Recovery as it was then called), which met at Hurstville, Sydney, on April 27, 1957.

The wisdom they gained in helping each other to overcome life's challenges and recover from mental illness was carefully recorded and forms the basis of the unique Grow program. The model they developed was exceptionally innovative, supporting personal power, control and self determination to people with a mental illness at a time when the notion of recovery from mental illness was shunned.

The Grow program has been substantially researched and is probably the only evidence based community mental health program in Australia.

Grow continues to be a consumer based organisation with participants of the program involved in all facets of Governance, from local leadership teams, to state advisory teams and up to our national Board.

Con Keogh remained a prominent leader of Grow in Australia and advocate for people with mental illness for over 40 years. He was instrumental in taking Grow's Program to the USA, New Zealand and Ireland.

In 2004, Fr Con was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community here and overseas through Grow.

Grow's motto is Truth, Character, Friendship. "Friendship just lifts the burden off people," said Fr Con. "Through friendships you are socialised and re-integrated into society." The Grow philosophy is very strong on people taking their share of responsibility for their downward spiral and also their own personal growth.

Today there are nearly 600 Grow groups in the world, including 250 in Australia.

Have Your Say



Money kept in trust in Inpatient Units

We have heard that some hospitals may have changed their procedures about cash kept in trust accounts in inpatient units. It was raised with us that on discharge from the hospital consumers were given a cheque in lieu of cash. We were told this was inconvenient and that cash was the preferred method.

Have you got something to say on this issue? Please let us know your thoughts—you can reach us on policy@nswcag.org.au or on 9332 0200.

Have Your Say: Raising issues, making complaints and access to individual advocacy

We are talking to consumers about their experiences around raising issues and making complaints. We want to know if you:

Have made a complaint to a mental health service, informally or formally?

Received support to navigate the complaints process?

Have received information about the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission?

The information you share with NSW CAG will inform recommendations we make to government on how to improve the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission and will help shape our ongoing advocacy work.

If you wish to share your experiences, you can go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MHcomplaints>

You can also contact us to share your experiences on 9332 0200 (ask for a member of the Policy Team) or email us on policy@nswcag.org.au

NSW CAG is also looking for services and places to do face to face consultations. If you know of a service that we should visit, or you would be willing to host a consultation, please contact us on the details above.

Older persons and mental health

NSW CAG is looking at the issues related to older people with mental health problems. We will be talking to people about their experience of adult mental health services, specialist older peoples mental health services, and residential care services.

We sit on a working group with NSW Health which has a specific focus on increasing consumer participation of older people accessing mental health services in NSW. NSW CAG will be supporting consultations with consumer and carer organisations in the older peoples' mental health sector with the hope to embed engagement practices into services.



Consultations with NSW CAG are planned for early in 2012. If you have relevant lived experience you would like to share with the Policy Team, please contact us at 02 9332 0200 or policy@nswcag.org.au

NSW CAG office closures during the holiday period



NSW CAG offices will be closed from midday 23rd December 2011 and reopen on Tuesday 3rd January 2012.

We wish everyone a happy and safe holiday period and we will endeavour to return emails and answer enquires on our return.



NSW Consumer Advisory
Group—Mental Health Inc.
Suite 501, 80 William Street
Sydney NSW 2011

Phone: 02 9332 0200

Fax: 02 9332 0299

E-mail:

info@nswcag.org.au

Bridging the Gap!

VISIT US ON THE WEB

WWW.NSWCAG.ORG.AU

Who is NSW CAG

The NSW Consumer Advisory Group - Mental Health Inc. (NSW CAG) is the independent organisation representing mental health consumers at a state level.

Our purpose is to make sure that mental health consumers' views are heard by policy makers, service providers and the community, through promoting consumer participation in relevant state level policy making and service development decisions, implementation and evaluation.

NSW CAG works to bridge the gap between the grassroots, personal knowledge of consumers, and the knowledge of policy makers and the state government.

Our Vision and Purpose

Our vision is for all people with a lived experience of mental illness to be able to participate meaningfully in society and to experience fair access to quality recovery focused services which reflect their needs.

Our purpose is to ensure that mental health consumer views are heard by policy makers, service providers and the community, through promoting consumer participation in relevant policy making and service development decisions.

Upcoming Events

Conference - From Outlaws towards Inclusion

17 February, Chemical Sciences Mezzanine, Theatre M17 (lower campus), University of NSW, Kensington
For more information visit http://www.idrs.org.au/news/news.html#conference_2012_OTI

TheMHS Summer Forum - Confronting Self-Harm: from understanding to responding

23-24 February 2012, Aerial UTS Function Centre, Sydney, NSW

For more information go to <http://www.themhs.org/summer-forum/2012-summer-forum->

Voices Vic Conference 2012

23-24 February 2012, Storey Hall, RMIT University, 342 Swanston St, Melbourne, 3000

For more information visit http://www.prahranmission.org.au/hearing_voices.htm

"A Vision for Sydney's Health" Forum

9 March 2012, Ritchie Theatre, John Niland Scientia, Building at the University of NSW, Kensington (enter gate 11, Botany Road)

For more information go to http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/news/events/2011/Mar/09_smh.pdf

Living Well Conference

2-3 May 2012, Mantra Hotel, Parramatta NSW

For more information go to

<http://www.mentalhealth.asn.au/be-informed/living-well-conference-2-3-may-2012.html>