

Alcohol Summit

The NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse was hosted by the NSW Government from 26-29 August 2003 at Parliament House in Sydney.

MHCC supported the recommendation made by the 2002 Legislative Inquiry, that the NGO sector is the most appropriate setting for the necessary ongoing management of people with a 'dual diagnosis'

MHCC made a submission to the Summit which addressed issues such as 'Dual Diagnosis' and inadequate communication between mental health and alcohol services, resulting in clients 'falling through the gaps' in the health care system. A co-ordinated and shared case management approach was recommended which can address both areas of need as well as the development of integrated models of care and the implementation of strategies for cross sector training and skilling. MHCC also supported the recommendation made by the 2002 Legislative Inquiry into Mental Health Services, that the NGO sector is the most appropriate setting for the necessary ongoing management of people with a 'dual diagnosis' and highlighted the need for greater funding and resources, as well as organisational support from Area Health Services, to continue to provide and develop innovative and effective programs. The Summit received 300 public submissions and has agreed to 318 recommendations which have been captured in its Communiqué which can be found on the Summit website at www.alcoholsummit.nsw.gov.au. It is anticipated the Government will respond to these recommendations by the end of this year.

As a result of the Summit, MHCC was involved in an NCOSS consultation and submission to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues review of the Inebriates Act 1912 and the efficacy of compulsory treatment of people with severe alcohol and/or drug dependence. MHCC highlighted the importance of increased funding and services for people with drug and alcohol problems, particularly those with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and drug and/or alcohol abuse.