



CONSULTATION AROUND THE NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) has been contracted by the Mental Health & Special Programs Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing to undertake a review of the 2nd National Mental Health Plan in order to inform the development of a 3rd National Mental Health Plan. MHCC organised the NSW consultations held in Leichhardt and Bathurst in October 2002 on behalf of MHCA.

By way of background, the 2nd National Mental Health Plan (1998 - 2003), adopted by all Health Ministers, set national direction for the reform of Australian mental health services. The 2nd Plan also established a collaborative framework to assist State/Territory and Commonwealth governments in pursuing these directions over the period of 1998 to 2003. The Plan was developed because of a recognised need to reform mental health services in order to provide structure and national direction in the promotion of mental health, prevention of mental illness, reducing the impact of mental illness on the community, and assuring the rights of consumers.

The aim of the review is to:

- Provide the community and the mental health sector with an opportunity to comment on the success or otherwise of the 2nd National Mental Health Plan, and to provide comment on the International Mid-term Review of the 2nd National Mental Health Plan in Australia.
- Enable the community and sector to provide input into the development of a 3rd National Mental Health Plan.

The method undertaken by the MHCA to achieve the above aims includes a national consultation involving community forums around Australia in each capital city as well as in regional areas, and the circulation of 3 surveys.

Community forums with participation from key constituents and community members were undertaken by the MHCA in partnership with 'beyondblue: the national depression initiative' and the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund during October – November 2002.

Preliminary analysis of consultation data has identified the following key themes:

- National leadership
- Community participation
- Institutionalisation in the community
- Resources
- Service integration
- Human rights
- Workforce
- Stigma

- Spectrum of care settings
- Innovation

A third survey (S3) reflecting 'ways forward' based on the consultation data will be available for completion in early 2003. S3 will be available via www.mhca.com.au and www.beyondblue.org.

Consultation findings will be presented to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in the form of a final report, which will be inclusive of a set of key recommendations for ways forward. A public report will be released in February 2003.

Further information about the consultation process, final analysis, and recommendations is available by contacting the MHCA on ph: (02) 6285 3100 or via the web at www.mhca.com.au.

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