

MHCC MEDIA RELEASE - 3 December 2003

NSW Government Response to the Select Committee Inquiry into Mental Health Services

'The response has acknowledged the need for an across government approach to mental health in NSW by providing oversight by the Human Services Committee of Cabinet.'

'It is only with the cooperation of the Human Service CEOs working together that inroads into the whole of life and not just clinical aspects of care for people with mental health problems and disorders can be made,' said Ms Jenna Bateman Executive Officer of the Mental Health Co-ordinating Council.

'Stable supported accommodation, vocational training and employment and good social networks are as necessary to recovery from mental illness as medication and other clinical treatments. Without support to live in the community all the medication in the world will not keep people out of hospital'.

Ms Bateman stated that, 'In view of the fact that every family will be effected by a mental health problem at some point the increase in emergency and community resources detailed in the government response is welcomed.'

'Also welcomed is the determination to ensure clearer lines of accountability for mental health spending. With the move to have Area Mental Health Directors fully responsible for mental health spending this will be achievable.'

'Whilst Ms Cherie Burton should be congratulated for the comprehensiveness of the government's response - implementation is the key. Too many good intentions go wrong through inadequate follow through on good initiatives.' Ms Bateman said.

Ms Bateman recommended that, Dr Brian Pezzutti, who chaired the Mental Health Inquiry be strongly encouraged to take up the offer to sit on the *Implementation Taskforce* as he has proved himself an excellent advocate for people with mental health problems and disorders, their families and carers and the system that supports them.

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