

Media Release (RANZCP/MHCA)

February 9th 2004

NSW Government Receives No Confidence Vote From Mental Health Sector

Leading figures from the NSW and National Mental Health Sector released a position statement today expressing no confidence in the NSW Government to administer adequate mental health care.

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA), the NSW Branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrist (RANZCP) and the NSW Comprehensive Area Service Psychiatrists Group hosted the meeting, held at the NSW RANZCP premises, which involved leading consumer and carer advocates as well as advocates from non-government organisations, psychiatry, psychology, occupational therapy, social work, mental health nursing and general practice.

Dr Grace Groom, Chief Executive Officer, MHCA said, "This collaboration of representatives from across the mental health sector considers the NSW government is failing the people of NSW through its lack of commitment to providing the range of mental health services required by people who live in this state."

"The collaboration moved a vote of no-confidence in the Premier of NSW to deliver a system of effective and accessible mental health care," said Dr Groom.

Dr Louise Newman, Chair, NSW Branch, RANZCP said, "We are managing people with illnesses not beds!

"NSW has been last in its per capita funding for mental health care since 1994. It remains last.

"We call on the Premier to acknowledge that the system of mental health care in NSW is in crisis and to immediately allocate a substantial increase in resources across a range of community and inpatient settings."

"We believe we have excellent clinicians in this State but unfortunately they have been significantly demoralised due to the ongoing lack of resourcing and professional support," concluded Dr Newman.

The collaboration has agreed to continue to meet to drive genuine reform in NSW and will put a series of recommendations for reform to the Premier.

Those available for interview include:

- Dr Grace Groom, Chief Executive Officer, MHCA
- Dr Louise Newman, Chair, NSW Branch, RANZCP
- Prof Ian Hickie, Director Brian and Mind Research Institute, University of Sydney
- Professor Alan Rosen, Comprehensive Area Service Psychiatrists Group
- Ms Joy Said, Spokesperson, Mental Health Coordinating Council
- Ms Leonie Manns, Deputy Chair, Network of Consumer Advisory Groups
- Dr Chris McAuliffe, Mental Health Advisor, Australian Divisions of General Practice

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