

Background material for use in newsletters and websites.

### **NGO Mental Health Workforce Study**

The National Health Workforce Taskforce, in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers, has commenced a project titled 'NGO Mental Health Workforce Study' that is aiming to better our understanding of the existing non-government mental health workforce, and what the future needs of the workforce may be.

We would strongly encourage you to participate in this survey to ensure the highest quality data is collected about our workforce.

Data collected will be de-identified, and will assist the sector with forward planning and ongoing workforce recruitment, retention and development. Further, it will support raising a consistent and professional profile for our often under-valued workforce.

Whilst this survey is distinct from the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy and Plan being developed in partnership with Siggins Miller, it has strategic linkages with the Mental Health Non-government Organisation Project. The two projects will be liaising on an ongoing basis to maximise the synergies between the two projects.

It is acknowledged by jurisdictions that government that they have limited knowledge of the scope, size and skills of the current mental health workforce in the community sector. The NGO mental health sector is increasing in size and importance, but little is known about the workforce, hampering planning. The valuable contribution that this sector makes should and needs to be better understood.

The aim of the project is to design and test a methodology to support mental health workforce planning for the non-government community mental health sector, through the provision of improved data and information on workforce supply and trends..

The study aims to create a workforce planning tool for future planning, and to achieve a minimum dataset for the workforce.

The first phase of this program will involve distributing a survey for the completion by managers of non-government organisations providing mental health services to the community. As such, we are requesting your assistance in this project, with specific regard to the distribution of the survey through your membership network.

This first stage of data collection is an internet based survey, with a paper based option. It seeks to identify the activities, size and needs of the organisations and workforce, and contributes to government policy. It is our aim that the data collected will assist in raising a consistent and professional profile for the mental health non-government organisation sector.

It is expected that the survey will be distributed by the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2009.

The National Health Workforce Taskforce (NHWT) was established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2006. The NHWT undertakes projects which inform development of practical solutions on workforce innovation and reform. It will soon be subsumed by a new agency, Health Workforce Australia (HWA), agreed by COAG in November 2008, which will report to Health Ministers and operate across the health and education sectors.

Further information on NHWT and the NGO Mental Health Workforce Study can be found at [www.nhwt.gov.au](http://www.nhwt.gov.au).