

Dear Members

2006/07 Mental Health NGO Infrastructure Grants Program

Many of you will have seen the press release yesterday announcing allocation of \$2 million to support mental health NGOs develop their infrastructure so they are better able to manage existing and future grant funds and better able to assist people accessing their services.

This is great news for MHCC members! Constant prioritising of direct service delivery to consumers and carers has meant NGOs frequently have little capacity left to focus on business and operational matters. This new initiative will enable NGOs to identify and address areas of their operations that they feel require upgrading or development.

The Infrastructure Grants will be coordinated and managed through MHCC. An Infrastructure Grants Review and Approvals Committee will be established to assist in the selection and administration of grants. This committee will sit outside the MHCC Board structure. Its makeup will include representation from MHCC, the Consumer Advisory Group, the Centre for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs and other financial and operations expertise.

The criteria against which applications for Grants will be considered will be based on the Core Standards developed by the Quality Improvement Council:

- * Building quality organisations
- * Providing quality services and programs
- * Sustaining quality external relationships

All Grant applications which relate to an organisation's ability and capacity to undertake quality review and accreditation processes will be considered.

Applications in relation to capital equipment, furniture, fixtures and fittings, building repairs, expenditure related to OH&S legislation and any infrastructure issue impacting negatively on the comfort and care of people accessing services will also be considered.

A formal process of grant application is currently being developed and members will be invited to apply. It is envisaged that this Grants Program will roll out fairly quickly so I urge members to begin considering how they might best take advantage of this opportunity.

The MHCC AGM Day set down for November 3rd 2006 at the Australian Technology Park, Redfern, will be an opportunity to hear more about this initiative and I encourage all members to attend.

Best wishes

Jenna Bateman
Executive Officer