

Mental health work qualifications under review

Spring 2006: View from the Peak

The MHCC is working in partnership with the NSW Community Services & Health Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB) to develop and promote a range of mental health work training initiatives.

On 25 October we jointly convened an industry forum to consider the review of the Community Services Training Package (CHC02) and Mental Health Work qualification/s being conducted by the national Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council.

About 25 people attended the forum with representation being quite diverse and including:

- Mental health consumers & carers
- Mental health NGO managers & direct care staff
- Other community services staff with an interest in mental health
- Other peak bodies
- NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) & TAFE

In her introductory remarks the ITAB Executive Officer, Ms Susan Scowcroft, commented that when the 1999 Community Services Training Package was under review it was a challenge to get input regarding the needs of people with mental health problems and disorders but that this topic was clearly high on the priority list for all community services now!

Participants were encouraged to provide comment as to their current and future training needs for mental health work vocational outcomes. The need for the Mental Health Work qualification/s to better reflect consumer-focused and evidenced-based practice in psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery was the key topic of discussion on the day. There was also considerable discussion about how to better develop "attitudinal competencies" in mental health workers.

There was very strong support for the reintroduction of Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualifications in Mental Health Work so as to provide career pathways for people wanting to specialize in mental health work in the community sector. The introduction of Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas in Mental Health Work was also supported.

The first draft of the revised Community Services Training Package and Mental Health Work qualification/s will be available for comment in mid 2007 and a further forum will be convened to consider its content.