



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) is pleased to announce the launch of the Second Edition of the Mental Health Rights Manual. The new 'on-line' version was launched by NSW Mental Health Director, Professor Beverley Raphael on October 22nd 2004. Director of the Law and Justice Foundation, Geoff Mulherin, was also present to celebrate the launch as primary funder of the resource.

The manual contains up to date and validated information on a wide range of issues relevant to people in contact with the mental health system. It has a focus on social justice explaining all aspects of legal 'rights' pertaining to disability, health care and civil rights. It details processes, resources and services to help people understand and better access the mental health system in NSW. The manual guides people through complex legislation such as the NSW Mental Health Act 1990 and the Health Records and Information and Privacy Act 2002.

It also explores complaint mechanisms, eligibility to benefits and allowances and the functions and powers of guardianship and financial management tribunals. Special attention is given to impacts on family and carers, understanding the effects of culture and ethnicity and engagement with the criminal justice system. Contact details for mental health services, government agencies and community based support groups and services are also provided.

Originally in hard copy the decision was taken to produce the second edition as an 'on-line' resource to enable wider accessibility and to allow updating whenever legislation or information changes. With the current review of the Mental Health Act 1990 due for completion in early 2005, being 'on-line' means the manual will always be accurate. Also, importantly the 'on-line' nature of the manual allows MHCC to provide the resource free of charge to all who access the MHCC website. www.mhcc.org.au The manual has been designed in line with principles of disability access and plain English.

For more information contact MHCC on: (02) 9555 8388