



## Priority Taskforce for Mental Health

The NSW Mental Health Priority Taskforce (The Taskforce) has been established by the NSW government as an advisory body to contribute to the development of new policy directions and service improvements in the mental health system. The Taskforce was recently briefed on the new *Interagency Action Plan for Better Mental Health* and will be involved in its ongoing implementation process.

The Taskforce, made up of a group of mental health stakeholders from the government and non-government sector, will be kept up to date on current developments and be asked to comment on future directions for mental health services in NSW over the next 2 to 5 years. Members are expected to provide advice as individuals rather than as spokespersons for their respective organisations. However, we are pleased that Leone Crayden, MHCC Chair and Doug Holmes, MHCC Board Member are members of the Taskforce.

The makings of this Taskforce began with the Minister for Health's announcement of reforms to the NSW health system detailed in the document *Planning Better Health*. The reforms include a new clinical and community participation framework, which includes the establishment of the Health Care Advisory Council and Health Priority Taskforces (one of which is the MHPT). The Health Priority Taskforces will maintain linkages with each other and report to the Health Care Advisory Council, which in turn will provide advice to the Director-General and Minister for Health.

The Terms of Reference of the Mental Health Priority Taskforce include:

- Provide direction and leadership for the development of an integrated mental health service for NSW
- Provide advice in relation to strategic planning for NSW mental health services
- Establish and maintain effective linkages for planning and communication
- Engage the community and carers in consultation, policy development, service planning, implementation and evaluation
- Review mental health programs and initiatives
- Investigate new and innovative models of service delivery

The Taskforce most recently held a planning workshop in which they identified priority themes including:

- Prevention, early recognition, early intervention and promotion
- Acute care (including police and ambulance)
- Long term care, community and family support (rehab and recovery)
- Service integration (overlap areas [substance misuse, developmental disability, physical illness], GPs and other health sectors)
- Resources and capacity of health workforce.

Specific actions have also been recommended and relevant partners identified. Central to all of these priority themes are: areas of need (rural and remote, indigenous and CALD), General Practitioners (GPs) and quality of service