



DISCUSSION PAPER

Scoping Study to Inform the Establishment of a New Peak National Mental Health Consumer Organisation

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List of Illustrations by Pauline Miles, reproduced here with permission:

The Backyard

The Advocate

Pacific Highway

No My Dinner

Many Paths and Ways

Hang your Hat Up

Landscape



INTRODUCTION

Consultations in Phase One revealed a strong desire for a new national mental health consumer organisation which is independent, has a national focus, and is grounded in grass roots experience and knowledge.

There was a call for the organisation to provide national leadership through the promotion of a positive and well regarded organisational image which demonstrates competence, integrity, performance, an ability for the membership to work together, and the development of its member base through strategies such as mentoring, education and training, information provision and exchange and involvement in the organisation's working processes and operations.

A high level of support was evident for an organisation which worked collaboratively with others, conversed extensively with its members, had a diverse and inclusive membership base and fulfilled a range of significant roles and functions.

Importantly, the organisation was seen as needing to focus on a socially inclusive and human rights approach to mental health consumer issues and interests through an all of government approach to national issues and portfolio areas including attention to the elimination of discrimination, service needs such as housing, employment, education and training, income support, health, arts and recreation, and through engagement with and of special needs or 'excluded' groups including indigenous, culturally and linguistically different, youth, older persons, dual disability and others.

Key areas of work identified for the new organisation included policy and research, information provision and exchange, systemic advocacy and lobbying, supporting local consumer organisations and consumer service development and the establishment of standards and guidelines for consumer workforce development. There was a strong call for the new organisation to take a lead role in evaluating systemic change and development nationally.

This discussion paper seeks to reflect the ideas and preferences identified during Phase One of the consultations. Importantly, it outlines an approach to organisational development which foreshadows a strong, viable and accountable organisation based on good governance principles and reflecting the need for an organisation which can deliver for and with mental health consumers nation wide.

It is anticipated the new organisation would need time to develop over a period of years following its initial establishment. The stages through which a new and effective organisation must progress will include an initial establishment phase in which the organisational essentials such as a membership base, governance and legal arrangements, policies and procedures, initial operational priorities, staffing and infrastructure are created and bedded down. Following this, it can be envisaged that the organisation will need to review and further establish strategic priorities over a longer-term time frame. The organisation will need time to develop the ways to deliver on its objectives, further build its membership base and expand and exploit its relationships with others. In essence, an organisation which aims for continuous improvement will always be looking for the next step in keeping itself focussed on reaching its full potential.

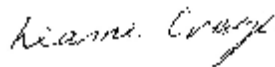
It is likely that a fully mature organisation will take a number of years to emerge. During the time of its emergence it will need to devote substantial energies to the processes of consumer engagement; relationship building with the community, government and others; the establishment of exploitable opportunities for action through new funding streams and the

establishment of expertise; and importantly, on strategies which enable it to demonstrate a competence to deliver.

It will be important for the new organisation to clearly articulate its specific roles and functions. In particular, for a new national mental health consumer peak, its focus of advocating for systems change must be clearly distinguished from any expectation that it is able to advocate for individuals in need. These individual advocacy processes are ones which lie in the local service delivery area and one priority for the new peak might well be the systems change which will enable this to happen more effectively.

The Project Team looks forward to receiving your feedback to this Discussion Paper.

Finally, our thanks and appreciation to Pauline Miles, a mental health consumer advocate and practicing artist, for the artwork appearing in this Discussion Paper.



LEANNE CRAZE
Bungendore, November 2009

1. What would be the roles and benefits of the new peak?

The key roles and benefits of the new national mental health consumer peak organisation are outlined below.

Role One

TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENT ADVICE, INCLUDING TO GOVERNMENT, ON ISSUES AND POLICIES AFFECTING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

'The new organisation needs to create and promote policies that prevent the next generation who experience mental illness from going through the things I've had to.'
(Melbourne)

'The new organisation needs to help us get the services that actually work and that we want to use because they work.'
(Toowoomba)

It is envisaged that this advice will, over time, provide the Australian government and others with the benefit of a single point of contact which enables a valid, cogent and broadly unified and inclusive mental health consumer viewpoint (or viewpoints) on policy and service delivery issues across whole of government portfolio areas including:

- Human rights
- Social inclusion;
- Indigenous healing, mental health and social and emotional wellbeing;
- Health, including equitable access to effective general health care for people with mental health problems;
- Housing and homelessness;
- Education and training;
- Employment;
- Income;
- Disability;
- Arts, sports, recreation and leisure;
- Family support and child development;
- Youth;
- Aged care;
- Veterans and the defence community
- Forensics; and
- Multicultural affairs.

These collective viewpoints will be based on the active and structured input of people with a lived experience as mental health consumers including identified special interest or needs groups and will thus ensure confidence in the advocacy stances promoted. They will be presented from a clearly stated philosophical and values base which

emphasises human rights, and the principles and practices associated with recovery, participation and social inclusion.

Role Two

TO PROVIDE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

'By being an authority on consumer participation the new organisation can help to make a better path for people than the path I have walked.' (Castlemaine)

Leadership will be provided in the modelling of effective mental health consumer engagement and participation processes as well as:

- Providing beneficial insights into good participatory practice;
- Establishing an engaged and proactive mental health consumer community ; and
- Recovery practices and principles and participation.

It is envisaged that the new peak will establish broadly based structures and consumer friendly strategies to enable inclusive participation in its operational and policy development processes.

Additionally, the proactive engagement of interest from mental health consumers from outside of the organisation's membership, community members, government and other key stakeholders important to the field of mental health and well-being will be targeted through a range of innovative strategies involving active and supported consumer participation. These strategies are envisaged as including the innovative use of technology and the operation of mentoring, ambassador and champions programs.

Role Three

TO PROVIDE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER ORGANISATION AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

'We are all doing things differently but despite this we often end up making the same mistakes. This group sets up, then folds, another group sets up and makes the same mistake. The new national organisation can help by developing some guidelines and resources, so fledging organisations thrive and grow.' (Perth)

'Consumer organisations are showing that they can develop new types of recovery and support services that are staffed by consumers. These services do work. We know they do, but that is not enough. The new organisation has a role to play in promoting the evaluation of these new services and then making sure the lessons learned about what works, what doesn't work, for whom, when and why become incorporated into mental health knowledge and practice.' (Sydney)

Leadership will be provided through the development and provision of information, guidelines and resources to assist mental health consumer organisations and groups to establish and operate in an effective and sustainable manner. This will have the important benefit over time of demonstrating the viability and efficacy of mental health consumer organisations, peer support, self-help initiatives and other consumer initiated new service types and recovery initiatives.

This leadership in relation to consumer organisation can be expected to have substantial employment benefits both directly, and through the demonstration and modelling of effective employment participation practices and achievement. It is envisaged that the new peak will provide leadership to support the continued establishment, growth, development and diversification of the mental health consumer workforce.

This workforce and the strategies required to support it can be identified in two separate categories. That is:

- The large numbers of people in the general workforce or struggling to obtain access to it as a consequence of their individual mental health issues; and
- Those mental health consumers who are engaged in or who might wish to be engaged in the provision of peer support, consumer advocacy or other work-force roles within the mental health workforce across health, disability and community service sectors.

The new national mental health consumer peak would directly address the requirements for mental health consumer workforce development through the establishment of national policy guidelines, standards and other resources to support good practice in mental health workforce development, peer leadership and participation as peer workers.

Role Four

TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN PROMOTING A POSITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCE

'I would like the peak to promote the abilities of people who have a mental illness, our resourcefulness, our resilience, our talents and creativity and our successes and achievements'
(Bunbury)

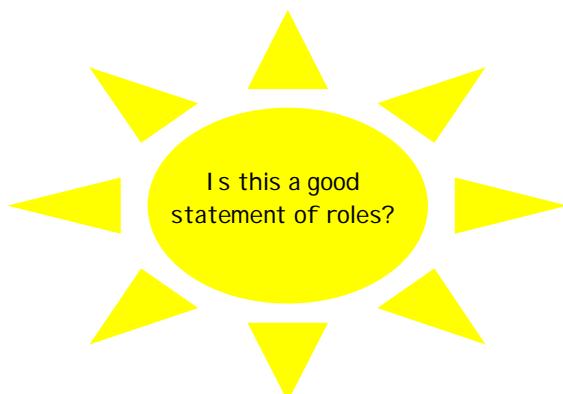
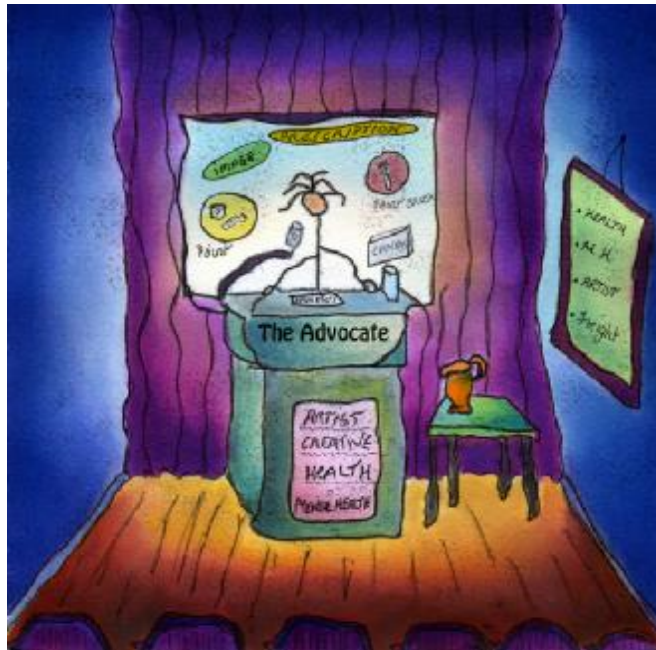
'My dream is that when people in the street see the new peak's logo, they recognise it, know what it stands for and say yes that's a good organisation to support because it is trying to make things better for people we know in our homes, families, workplace ...'
(Adelaide)

The new peak will promote a positive understanding of people with mental illness and their lived experience through building and modelling an organisational culture of excellence. Specific elements considered essential to the new organisation's development include a focus on a just culture, an ethical culture and a socially responsible culture.

The operation of a new mental health consumer peak according to these cultural parameters will, of itself, provide a direct and visible challenge to many of the myths and discriminatory viewpoints currently associated with the lived experience of mental illness. Additionally, the new peak and its members will seek to engage with and establish positive and proactive working relationships with the broad range of key stakeholders of importance in the field of mental health and well-being including through the engagement of persons of influence in the community.

The benefits seen as flowing from this cultural perspective and practice include the development over time of greater community understanding and acceptance of the lived experience of mental ill health, of more positive and productive policy, viewpoints

and practice frameworks amongst policy makers and service providers, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.



2. What would be the key areas of work for the new organisation?

'The new national organisation needs to make sure people in Canberra and wherever else decisions are made about us, understand what life is like when you have just come out of hospital, have nothing much in the fridge, nothing much to do and can't even read the Centrelink form let alone fill it in ...' (Batemans Bay)

In view of the roles identified in Section 1, it would be anticipated that the new organisation would undertake work in the following areas:

- Policy development, lobbying and systemic advocacy;
- Research and information development and dissemination;
- Resource development and dissemination;
- Strategic engagement with community and media regarding mental health consumer issues;
- Membership development and services;
- Conduct of significant national projects and partnership-based collaborations.

Examples of activities that might be undertaken by the organisation on any given day might include:

- Researching issues that affect or are of concern to consumers;
- Communicating with and working with members on their needs and issues of concern;
- Liaising with members and other stakeholders on the development of a range of policy positions to address these issues;
- Promoting these positions and policies through the sector and by directly lobbying relevant Ministers and departments and through the internet and publications;
- Engaging with media and the community about consumer viewpoints and concerns;
- Providing guidance and resources which assist mental health consumer organisational and service development; and
- Undertaking projects which have direct impact on issues of concern to consumers or which demonstrate the capacity for change.



3. What would it be a peak of?

During the consultations there was wide ranging support for the establishment of a new national mental health consumer organisation from individual consumers and from mental health consumer organisations as well as from governments and service providers. Individuals and organisations alike expressed a desire to not only be a part of the new organisations, but to be actively involved.

'The new peak must operate on the big stage and I want to be a part of it.'
(Bunbury)

'The new peak needs to have a sense of ownership from all around Australia. It shouldn't be seen as belonging to any one part of Australia or to any one group or one set of organisations. Members need to have a sense of belonging and being able to influence what it says and does.'
(Perth)

'I want to be part of it. We need to be able to hang our hat up on its door and say 'this is our organisation''
(TheMHS)

The primary purpose of peak organisations is to represent the interests of an identified sector, group or constituency. This is done through fulfilling a range of identifiable functions – primarily systemic advocacy, lobbying and member support and engagement.

Having clarified the purpose of a peak organisation, a key question then asked during the consultation was –

What would the new national mental health consumer organisation be a peak of?

Four different options emerged during the consultations and from the research conducted to inform the project. The four options are:

- Model 1 - A peak of peaks;
- Model 2 - A peak of individuals;
- Model 3 - A peak of organisations; and
- Model 4 - A hybrid peak emphasising mental health consumer expertise and leadership.

Each of these options is in turn explained and discussed below.

Model 1

A peak of peaks (e.g. like the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations)

In this model the national organisation would be a peak of peak mental health consumer organisations, whether they are nationally-based or state-based organisations. The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) is an example of an organisation with this structure. Its members comprise nationally based and state based organisations and acknowledge that there might be more than one relevant organisation in each state. The organisational members of AFDO nominate and elect the board.

If this model were created in the mental health consumer sector in Australia, organisations that could seek membership might include:

- CAN (Mental Health) Inc.;
- GROW;
- Hearing Voices Network Australia;
- Blue Voices;
- Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia);
- Inspire Foundation;
- Multi-Cultural Mental Health Consumer Network;
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum;
- Post and Anti Natal Depression Association (National Consumer Advisory Group);
- Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC);
- NSW CAG;
- ACT Mental Health Consumer Network;
- Queensland Voice;
- Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia;
- Butterfly Foundation;
- Top End Mental Health Consumer Network;
- Mental Health Association of Central Australia; and
- Possibly others.

Some advantages which might seem to flow from this approach are:

- The potential for sharing policy, resources and expertise across organisations and membership, that is, it draws on the existing base of organisational expertise and wisdom;
- The potential to develop strategies for two-way communication between the new national organisation and nationally and state based mental health consumer organisations;
- Efficiency in providing membership services through existing organisational infrastructure, and
- The ready identification of gaps in the consumer organisational base.

Some possible disadvantages are to be found in:

- The small number of existing national and state based mental health consumer organisations throughout Australia and their limited organisational and infrastructural base;
- The potential for inequitable geographic representation and state based conflict and competition; and
- Mental health consumers who are not members of any organisation, feeling disenfranchised and excluded from the new national organisation.

- The possible maintenance of the status quo through entrenching the role of existing players at the expense of supporting the development of new organisations and innovations.

Model 2

A peak of individuals (e.g. Australian Conservation Foundation)

In this model the national organisation would be a peak of diverse individual members, similar to the former Australian Mental Health Consumer Network and to a range of organisations including the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA). The new national organisation's charter would be similar to that of the WWDA which describes its unique purposes and roles as seeking to:

'... ensure opportunities in all walks of life for all women with disabilities. In this it aims to increase awareness of, and address issues faced by, women with disabilities in the community.

WWDA seeks to ensure the advancement of education of society to the status and needs of women with disabilities in order to promote equity, reduce suffering, poverty, discrimination and exploitation of women with disabilities.

WWDA is unique, in that it operates as a national disability organisation; a national women's organisation; and a national human rights organisation.

(<http://www.wwda.org.au/about.htm>)

A national organisation based on individual membership has the essential characteristic of providing the opportunity for grass roots level participation, direct and equal involvement by individual members in selecting and controlling their governing representatives (the Board). This would, of course, be done according to whatever specific constitutional arrangements are put in place, for example:

- Direct election or election through electoral colleges or geographically defined electorates;
- First past the post or preferential voting system of all members;
- A phased system where the membership elects a national council or national advisory group which then elects the board.

Some advantages which might be seen to flow from this approach include:

- The valuing of grass roots ownership;
- Grass roots involvement in governance and policy development; and
- Grass roots involvement in operations, campaigns and fund raising.

Some possible disadvantages for a national organisation having an individual member base, and which could affect its ability to achieve the benefits sought, are the following.

- The logistical difficulties inherent in identifying, organising and utilising the skills and knowledge of the membership rationally and cost effectively. This may limit ability to ensure an expert, visionary and competent governance structure.
- A model based on individual membership alone, is possibly at increased risk of being dominated by strong personalities or personal differences.

- A model based on individual membership alone, is possibly at increased risk when individuals who are not closely associated with an organisation that can support them are accelerated into governance positions exceeding their level of expertise and experience.
- The lack of structural arrangements to facilitate a focus on and ability to map local and regional or state based issues.

Model 3

A peak of organisations (e.g. like Homelessness Australia)

In this model the national organisation would be a peak of diverse mental health consumer organisations whether they be nationally based, state based, regionally based or local organisations, networks or groups. To be a member, a mental health consumer organisation or group need not be a peak organisation. Criteria could be set for membership including for example, a requirement that an organisation's or group's membership comprise of a certain percentage of mental health consumers. Hence it might be possible for CAGs to be eligible for membership.

The options for electing the Board would be similar to Model 2 i.e.:

- Direct election or election through electoral colleges or geographically defined electorates;
- First past the post or preferential voting system of all members;
- A phased system where the membership elects a national council or national advisory group which then elects the board.

The advantage of this approach compared to Model 1 would be its ability to include a greater range of organisations and mental health consumer interests. With this greater range would possibly come a more inclusive membership.

The inclusion of locally-based groups or groups formed around a particular interest in a certain area (e.g. older person's mental health, ethno-specific mental health consumer group, a diagnosis-related group) could assist to increase the diversity of the new national organisation and increase its capacity to hear from consumers at the grass roots level.

The disadvantages with this model are similar to those of Model 1 and include:

- The current limited base of mental health consumer organisations in Australia;
- The potential for inequitable geographic representation and state based constituency conflict and competition;
- Mental health consumers who are not members of any organisation, feeling disenfranchised from the new national organisation.

Model 4

Hybrid model peak (e.g. similar to Mind Link UK and emphasising consumer leadership and expertise)

A peak of consumer leadership and expertise would comprise a hybrid membership of:

- Individuals;
- Nationally-based and state-based mental health consumer organisations; and
- Other mental health consumer organisations.

This more complex membership arrangement could best be supported within a legal entity framework of 'company limited by guarantee' and with a small Board comprising for example:

- Two positions reserved for election by individual members;
- Two positions reserved for election by organisational members;
- Three positions nominated and elected by special interest groups/advisory groups on a rotating term of tenure e.g. Indigenous, CALD, youth, older persons, dual disability, forensic, rural and remote; and
- Two additional positions for independent members appointed by the Board on the basis of specialist knowledge and expertise required by the Board, for example, financial management, business, community profile, legal and governance.

Consideration might also be given to the appointment of an independent person to the position of chair.

The major operational focus for such an organisation would be broad engagement and promotion of consumer expertise and leadership.

The potential benefits associated with a national organisation of this nature include:

- Its inclusiveness;
- Its ability to include 'representation' of individuals;
- The strengths and resources arising from the merging of the expertise and networks of organisational members with the lived experience and knowledge of individual members; and
- The capacity to co-opt specialised expertise on to the Board.

Other benefits include its national approach, the excluding of a focus on the politics of state/territory based constituency interests and rivalry, and its emphasis on the 'best candidate' selected through competitive democratic process. A further benefit is the maximisation of buy in from each of the key sets of stakeholders.

Potential limitations inherent in this approach might be thought to arise from each state and territory not being ensured that a member from their jurisdiction is on the Board. Some might view not having state branches from the outset a further limitation. However, nothing would prevent the new organisation from having provisions in its

constitution for the development of local and state branches as is the case with Mind Link UK and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Another possible limitation or problem arising from this model, is potentially higher recurrent costs as a result of its complexity

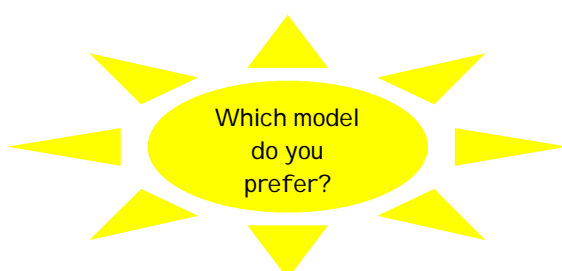
As with arrangements associated with the 'peak of diverse individuals' model outlined above, this hybrid model could be supported by a National Convention where a larger cross-section of members meet to debate the organisation's guiding policy frameworks and to make recommendations to the Board and the broader membership.

PLEASE NOTE:

In these models we have described the 'bare bones' of an organisation's membership structure. Added to the membership categories might be categories for 'friends' of the organisation holding associate membership and not having the right to vote.

Organisations also might wish to appoint patrons or life members in recognition of outstanding service or support to the Australian mental health consumer movement.

Organisational constitutions and structures are rarely static and often evolve over time. Any of the above models could over time evolve to include local, regional and state branches for example.



4. Where does the new national organisation fit in?

'We can't kid our selves by thinking we can do this alone. We have to get real and work with others and demonstrate the importance of our place and role. We need to work with other major organisations so that they can support us in lobbying to have our voice and views heard about the need for adequate funding and for the types of services we need and want.'
(Darwin)

'If we want the importance of our role and our contributions to be acknowledged, we must also acknowledge the importance of the roles and views of other key players.'
(Adelaide)

It is important to be clear about where this new national mental health consumer organisation fits in the overall picture.

The starting point for understanding where this new organisation fits in is to reflect on a number of its key characteristics:

- It is a national community based, non-government organisation;
- It is an independent and autonomous organisation;
- It is an organisation representing the interests of mental health consumers;
- It provides policy advice directly to the Australian government and advocates for change to improve the health outcomes and quality of life for people experiencing mental illness;
- It reports to and is accountable to mental health consumers Australia wide;
- It is also accountable to its' funding body(ies) for the performance of contractual arrangements and the acquittal of funds.

With this starting point we can begin to understand how its role might differ from other existing organisations.

The Australian government

Though it is envisaged that the organisation will have a direct reporting line to the Department of Health and Aging, any policy portfolio of the Australian government might seek advice from the new national organisation on issues and policies affecting the lives of people with mental illness e.g. income support, employment, housing, disability, transport, education and training, legal issues, arts and recreation, and social inclusion etc. Similarly, the new organisation might seek to promote its viewpoints across the whole of government.

State and territory governments

Currently all state and territory governments are investing in mental health consumer engagement and participation. Some states are in the middle of extensive reviews and are seeking to further strengthen consumer participation. In NSW, SA, VIC, Qld, and the ACT mental health consumer peak organisations are funded. Some are well established whilst others are just in the early stages of development like the Qld Voice for example.

Over and above state level participation and engagement, each state and territory government contributes to the operation of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum. Each state and territory government whilst welcoming the establishment

of a national mental health consumer organisation, do not want the work of the national Forum to be undermined in anyway or duplicated. Nor would they like to see the workload of their state mental health consumer peaks increased as a result of the emergence of the new national organisation.

Once established, state and territory governments as well as state-based peaks would be able to seek advice from the new national organisation as the need to do so arose.



National Mental Health and Consumer Carer Forum (NMHCCF)

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum is a national advisory group comprising individual consumers and carers from each state as well as representatives of national consumer and carer organisations which reports and provides advice to the Mental Health Standing Committee of the Australia Health Minister's Council. The Forum's secretariat services are provided by the Mental Health Council of Australia.

The Forum, if it chose, and depending on the membership structure adopted by the new organisation, could be a member of the new organisation.

Irrespective of the question of membership, the Forum and the new national mental health consumer peak organisation would be key strategic partners.

Mental Health Council of Australia

The Mental Health Council of Australia is an inclusive non-government peak organisation of mental health interest groups including for profit and not for profit organisations, professional associations, service providing organisations, academic and research institutes, state based community mental health peak councils and other peak organisations.

The new national mental health peak organisation could apply for membership or qualify for membership of the MHCA.

The Council and the new national mental health consumer peak organisation would be key strategic partners.

Professional associations

The new national organisation should also establish working relationships with each of the major professional associations in mental health including: Australian College of Mental Health Nurses; Australian Associations of Social Workers; Australian Association of Social Workers; Australian Psychological Society; Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists; Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; Dieticians Association Australia; Australian Counselling Association; Australian Medical Association; Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine; Australian College of Psychological Medicine; Australian Neuroscience Society; Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia; and Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Peak organisations in other health and community sectors

The new organisation would need to establish working relationships with peak organisations in other health or community sectors of importance to the well-being of mental health consumers. These areas will include but not be limited to consumer health, alcohol and other drugs, disability, indigenous communities, multicultural affairs, housing, homelessness and employment.

Community mental health peaks and state based peaks

Each state and territory has an existing community mental health (non-government organisation) peak. Nationally, there is a fledgling community mental health peak, Community Mental Health Australia. Some mental health consumer organisations and groups might simultaneously be members of these organisations as well as the new national mental health consumer organisation. There will be areas in which policy interests are similar and areas in which they are different.

It will be important for the new national organisation to develop strategic partnerships with Community Mental Health Australia and each of the state / territory peaks.

State-based peak mental health consumer organisations

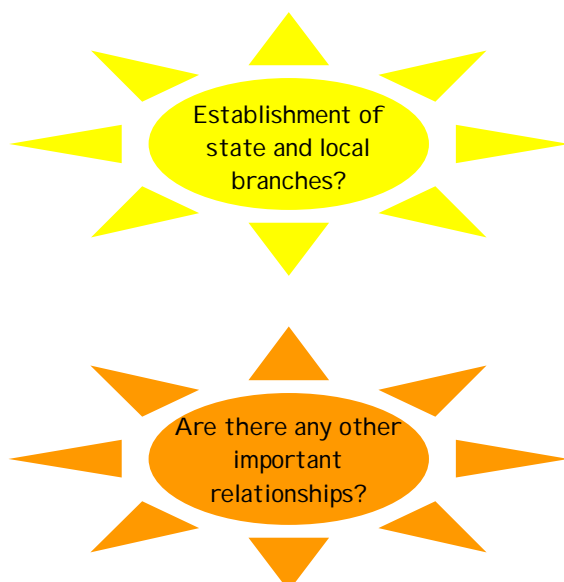
Currently, state-based peak mental health consumer organisations exist in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT. It is important that the new national organisation and the state-based peaks form strong working relationships. It is also important that the new national organisation does not duplicate the roles and activities of the state-based peaks. It is also important that the new organisation in seeking to involve the members of the state-based peaks avoids imposing demands on the staff and resources of the state-based peaks.

During the consultations people have asked the question: 'Can't the existing state-based mental health consumer peaks become state branches of the new national organisation?' This is not a simple question. Each of the existing state-based mental health consumer peaks is an autonomous and independent organisation. If the new national organisation were to make provision in its constitution for the establishment of state and/or local branches, the boards and members of the state-based peaks would need to consider this question for themselves in due course.

The recommendation of the consulting team is for there to be discussion in the 2nd Round of Consultations about whether the constitution of the new organisation should include provision for the establishment of state and local branches. In the team's view, state and local branches are something that might evolve in the future. To try and establish branches now before the new national organisation establishes itself and its credibility might be a task that places too many demands on the fledging organisation as well as the overstretched state peaks. Establishing state branches at this point in time, might also lead to unnecessary duplication, tension and difficulties.

State-based or regionally-based Consumer Advisory Groups (CAGS)

Whilst in some states and regions, CAGS have been dismantled, in many parts of Australia, the concept of CAGS remains strong and well supported by governments, mental health clinical services and community mental health service providers. Some CAGs comprise of consumers only whilst others include carers as well. Many CAGs have expressed a strong desire to be a part of the new national organisation. Depending on decisions about the membership structure and criteria for membership, there seems to be many compelling reasons for CAGs and their members to be actively involved in the new national organisation, whether that be as members or as associates. Irrespective of the question of membership, CAGs and the new national organisation must be close partners.



5. What is a viable organisational framework?

'We are passionate, we are talented but we must confront our fragilities, many of which arise from our strengths. We must put in place measures that will help to stop our fragilities and our passion from bringing us unstuck.' (Perth)

'We must realise that this is it folks. This is our last chance. We must make sure the organisational structure and its checks and balances are sound and the best they can possibly be.' (Canberra)

The new organisation needs to be prepared to meet the critical importance of good governance, which means that resources need to be invested in the governance process.

The new organisation also needs to acknowledge the importance of ethical behaviour and practice and demonstration of this through a living organisational culture.

Further, the new organisation must acknowledge the importance of recruiting and maintaining suitably qualified and experienced staff that are then valued, supported, and encouraged to develop professionally and personally within the organisation.

The consultations stressed the importance of the new organisation, honestly and openly acknowledging both the strengths and challenges arising from being a mental health consumer run organisation. Some key challenges arise from the varying levels of wellness that will be experienced by key office bearers, position holders, other members and staff. Added to fluctuation in wellness, are the stresses that arise from the rigours of participating in and running a consumer organisation and the passion that it takes to be there in the first place. It is important for the new national organisation to thoroughly examine these tensions. A comprehensive package of supports and resources, checks and balances, and policies and procedures must be set firmly in place so that the organisation functions soundly and takes care of its board, staff and members.

The following organisational diagram depicts an organisation in which members contribute to policy development through national conventions and member forums which provide policy advice and recommendations to the board. Members also contribute through participation in an advisory committee structure covering special interest groups such as Indigenous, CALD, youth, older persons, dual disability, rural and remote and families.

The board is constructed with reference to its functional capacity to deliver good governance and oversight to the organisation's operational arrangements which would include the specific engagement of organisational support services to ensure:

- Effective management and governance;
- Support, supervision and professional development for board members and staff;
- Independent facilitation of policy and planning processes where required;
- The development and monitoring of ethical behaviour and practice.

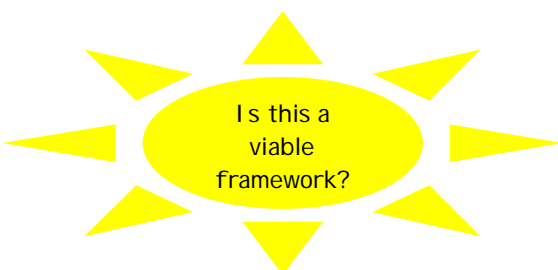
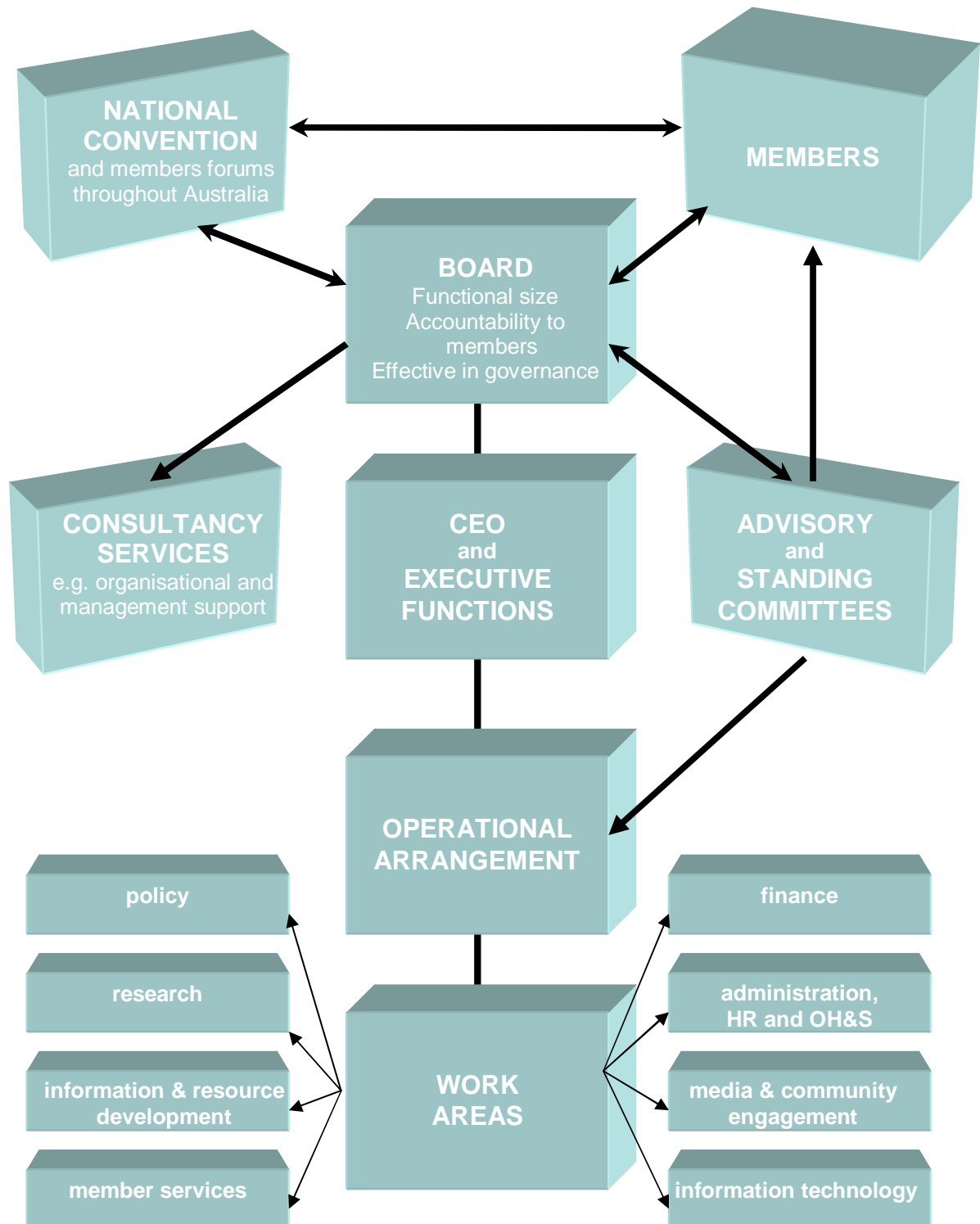
Staffing requirements include high quality executive management (CEO), and specialist staffing expertise in the areas of:

- Policy development and research;

- Information technology and information dissemination;
- Information and resource development;
- Member services;
- Media and community engagement; and
- Human resource management, financial management and administration.



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



6. What sort of a legal entity would work best?

Options for legal entity are an incorporated association, a company limited by guarantee or an unincorporated group operating under the legal umbrella of another organisation.

Important considerations identified through consultation discussion include the need for an organisation which is independent, sustainable, and well governed through the application of knowledge and skill. Other considerations included the wish for an organisation which is able to provide leadership; to demonstrate expertise; and to be representative of, engage with and deliver for, a range of consumer interest groups and geographic locations without fear or favour. It has been emphasised that the governing structure needs to be of a functional size and that qualification for membership of the Board must include a broad knowledge and skill base including business, financial, information technology, community and political knowledge and skill, and an acknowledgement of individual 'wellness'.

The benefits of incorporating as an association clearly include the simplicity and low cost of establishment and the meeting of regulatory requirements. Model rules allow for a simple governance framework to be established and a set of rules which are tested in law and so not subject to serious interpretive challenge. The potential costs associated with incorporation as an association could include limited regulatory oversight and thus, possible failure to develop and maintain adequate internal monitoring and accountability requirements.

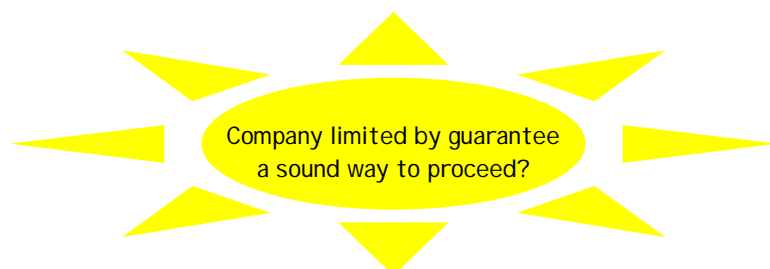
Commentators frequently argue that the 'limited by guarantee' form of incorporation is most appropriate for not-for-profit organisations given their mode of raising finances is typically by way of subscription. Under the Commonwealth of Australia Corporations Act, a company limited by guarantee is:

'A company formed on the principle of having the liability of its members limited to the respective amounts that the members undertake to contribute to the company if it is wound up.'

Establishing and operating a company limited by guarantee comes at a higher cost and with greater accountability, operating and reporting requirements than apply to an incorporated association. Benefits might be found in the fact that governance and external reporting requirements are more rigorous than apply to an incorporated association thus encouraging the maintenance of governance arrangements which value expertise, knowledge and review.

Further, the limited by guarantee structure is more likely to attract the recognition of mutuality for income taxation purposes.

For groups which operate under the auspice of a parent organisation these legal responsibilities are held outside of the group. A benefit of this might be that the group is able to focus on its core purposes and activities with little attention needed to be paid to the responsibilities and political processes of governance. The cost associated with this approach is that the group will be reliant on the goodwill of others, and either limited or supported by policy parameters, organisational purposes, resource allocations, resource management and governance processes devised by others.



7. How could the new organisation ensure good governance?

Clarity about the role of the board and the role of staff

Bradfield and Nyland (2002:16) provide a succinct definition of governance as applied to community organisations:

'Governance, or "corporate governance", is the process by which an organisation is given direction, its activities monitored and controlled and its personnel held to account. It is literally the 'government' of an organisation.'

Governance has also been described by the Australian National Audit Office (1991) as:

'... the processes by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account; encompassing observance and fulfilment of legal requirements, accountability, authority, stewardship, leadership, direction and internal control; influencing organisational purpose, values, culture, stakeholders and members and modes of operation.'

The body responsible for the governance function is generally referred to as the Board. Fishel (2003:4) defines the board as:

'The governing body of the organisation, the group of people who have ultimate accountability for and authority over the organisation, subject to the will of the members.'

The role of the board is to govern the organisation. This requires it to have the competence and expertise to:

- Ensure legal and accountability requirements are fulfilled;
- Encompass and promote the organisational culture and values;
- Provide leadership, direction and internal control of the organisation's internal functions;
- Ensure the organisation's responsiveness to members and stakeholders and exercise collective authority on their behalf.

In the managerial view, the board is regarded as the apex of a management hierarchy. Ideas and practice from management are considered appropriate to governance also - so board members should be chosen on the basis of their expertise and networks, in order to add value to the organisation's decision making processes. In this approach, board members will require careful selection, induction, training and team building to reinforce the organisational focus on building an effective and productive organisation.

The board has to provide purpose, leadership and overall strategy, and it has the responsibility of assuring the public that the organisation's finances are sound, its operations are legal, and its procedures work.

It is important to distinguish the role of the CEO in charge of the organisation's management from the role of the board. The following lists help to distinguish responsibilities.

Board Responsibilities

Some of the Board responsibilities listed here are direct responsibilities whilst other roles will require Board oversight.

- Setting long-term goals
- Having the final say when determining yearly and future objectives
- Ensuring the mission of the organisation is adhered to
- Approve and monitor the budget
- Approving major fund raising activities
- Taking responsibility for the company's financial records
- Evaluating programs, services, and products
- Evaluating Board members and their performance
- Employing the organisation's CEO, setting his / her compensation package and evaluating his / her performance
- Appointing new Board members and evaluating the Board's performance
- Taking ultimate responsibility for all legal matters
- Taking ultimate responsibility for compliance with regulatory requirements (e.g. annual general meeting, annual returns, audit)
- Appointing auditors and approving the audit of the records
- Managing committees
- Maintaining and building the organisation's public profile

CEO and Staff Responsibilities

- Providing information to the Board, including recommendations for action
- Supporting the Board's planning function
- Determining community needs
- Operating programs and reporting on their successes and shortcomings
- Preparing and managing the budget
- Evaluating performance
- Organising the organisation's events, fundraising activities, etc. once approved by the Board
- Proposing fundraising ideas
- Managing volunteers and staff (other than the CEO)
- Implementing Board decisions
- Conducting day-to-day financial operations
- Monitoring and managing daily operations

Joint Responsibilities

- Discussing ideas and forming long-term goals

- Planning organisational strategies
- Designing programs to achieve the group's mission
- Ensuring risk management programs are implemented
- Ensuring that achievements are recognised and documented
- Promoting the organisation

A successful relationship between Board members and staff comes from:

- Suitable processes, policies and procedures;
- Clearly defined management roles;
- Defined boundaries;
- Clear limits to the authority of the staff; and
- A CEO whose performance is adequately monitored by the Board.

The above lists have been adopted from Our Community website - read more at their website: www.ourcommunity.com.au.

Size of the Board

A functional board is of a limited size generally 7-11 people.

Expertise of the Board

A Board must comprise people with the expertise and experience required to exercise its governance responsibilities.

Tenure of term and Board renewal

A view consistently raised during Phase 1 of the consultations is that there should be a limited tenure for Board members. One approach could be to have the provision that a board member might only have two consecutive terms of three years e.g. a maximum of six years. It is therefore essential that the organisation has processes in place for Board renewal. These processes might include:

- The early identification of potential board members;
- Calling for expressions of interest and providing comprehensive governance training for interested members;
- Reserving specialist Board positions for direct appointment by the Board.

An interesting alternative suggested was a three year term including a year of provisional board membership for training. This arrangement allows a walk out clause for both parties. During the transitional year, the board member would receive training and induction but would not exercise board responsibilities.

Nomination and election processes

Whatever membership structure is decided, all members must have the opportunity to nominate or be nominated for election to the board. The procedures and rules for nomination and election of the board should be transparent and clearly laid out in the new national organisation's constitution.

The new organisation should state clearly the expertise and experience they require of members considering nominating, establish a transparent nomination process in which these criteria are openly addressed by applicants and consider establishing an audit process in which applicants are subject to independently conducted testing of their governance knowledge and skills as a transparent component of the nomination process. Provision for conduct of elections contained in the constitution should be consistent with best practice in electoral procedure and include an independent returning officer and a capacity for external auditing.

Training and support of the Board

Training and support for the board is essential. Training and support should include:

- Specialist governance advice through an engaged management consultancy service (e.g. Management Services Online);
- Regular training in governance for interested members;
- Compulsory induction training in governance for the Board;
- Compulsory induction training in meeting procedure and ethical decision making and practice;
- Ongoing training provided in connection with each Board meeting;
- Assistance provided by facilitation consultancy services at Board meetings as necessary;
- Specialist debriefing, professional supervision and support services for board members through procedures for identifying, acknowledging and supporting people through periods of ill-health as well as for dealing with the rigours of board membership;
- Investment in professional development opportunities for Board members during their tenure including for example undertaking the Directorship Course of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Conduct of Board meetings

Throughout the consultation people spoke highly of the AFDO model of board meetings whereby training is provided for Board members prior to the conduct of each board meeting. In addition to the training, an independent facilitator takes Board members through the agenda and board meeting materials prior to the actual conduct of the board meeting. This model is highly recommended.

Also recommended is the engagement of a management consultancy service that can be contacted by individual Board members as necessary.

Board meetings should follow standard meeting procedure. Rules should be established for the early distribution of Board meeting materials and again each

member should have access to an independent management consultancy service for confidential discussion.

Rotating the Board meetings through each state and territory is recommended. This would enable the Board to hold member forums and provide opportunity to engage with members throughout Australia.

Commitment to quality and ethical behaviour and practice

The inaugural board should ensure the development and adoption of a code of conduct and a statement of values for the organisation. Each new Board member should sign an agreement with the organisation to abide by the code of conduct.

The Board should also establish a calendar of scheduled processes for both self-assessment and external assessment of the Board's performance.

The Board has an important role in establishing a culture of responsibility, marked by participation in accreditation processes as appropriate, the provision of appropriate support and professional development to staff and the promotion of an ethical culture within the mental health consumer movement.

Payment of Board members

During the consultations the view was strongly put that Board members should be paid directors' fees or sitting fees. This is consistent with practice for organisations across a number of sectors. Once decisions are made about the organisation's legal entity, name, purposes and taxation status, legal advice is required about the capacity to then pay Board members in addition to reimbursing all reasonable expenses.

Standing Committees of the Board

Establishing Standing Committees of the Board in a selection of key areas will also assist to strengthen the new organisation's governance. Members as well as independent people with relevant expertise might be co-opted or asked to apply for position on the standing committees. The Standing Committees would report to the Board at each of its meetings. The new organisation could consider establishing Standing Committees in the following areas.

Finance Standing Committee – to monitor and review the finances, financial management and financial reporting of the organisation.

Audit and Risk Standing Committee – to establish the internal audit program and to oversight the work of the internal and external audits.

Board Renewal Standing Committee – to promote interest among the membership in becoming a Board member and undertaking training and mentoring; actively seek to nurture diversity on the board and ensure that the special needs of representatives on the Board from disadvantaged groups are met; determining selection criteria for board members; preparing necessary forms and templates eg statement of Board member roles and responsibilities, Board nomination form, Board members agreement, statement of conflict of interests etc; develop a prospective board member kit; develop an induction kit and program for new Board members; review nominations and applications for Board membership and where necessary provide feedback; review Board induction, training, supports and services etc.

HR, OH&S and Organisational Policies and Procedures Standing Committee – to ensure that all appropriate Human Resource Management and Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures and practices are in place and to ensure that the organisation's Code of Conduct and Statement of Values are actively adhered to within the organisation.

Membership Standing Committee – to provide leadership and to review measures that are being taken by the organisation to promote diversity among the membership; to guide and review the support and services being provided by the organisation to members.

Grievance and Complaints Committee – to review, address and report on complaints and grievances from staff and members as per the organisation's relevant policies and procedures.

Organisational Accreditation and Performance Review Standing Committee – to drive the organisation's quality performance and evaluation agenda.

The Board would be responsible for determining how and when these Standing Committees meet. In practice, Standing Committees might incorporate more than one area of focus with the exception that the Finance Standing Committee and the Audit and Risk Standing Committee must be established as separate bodies with no cross-over of personnel.



8. How would the new organisation get its work done?

Organisational commitment and support of staff

It is essential that the new organisation commits to excellence in human resource management and ensures that staff is supported in their duties, and career development. It must be an organisation that actively values and utilises its staff and their commitment, talents and expertise. The new organisation must ensure that it provides a safe and desirable workplace.

Code of conduct

The new organisation should ensure that its code of conduct and statement of values shapes what is done on a daily basis is integrated into the working practices of the organisation.

Advisory committees

As stated above, advisory committees should be established for special interest groups including CALD, youth, indigenous, older persons, dual disability, rural and remote, and families. Advisory committees would be established as standing committees of the board and their continuation would be reviewed every three years. Members would nominate and apply to the board to participate in an advisory committee which may comprise for example of up to 8-12 people.

The advisory committee members would establish their terms of reference and work plan and would report to each board meeting on their activities. Their work would be supported by staff of the organisation. Importantly the work of the advisory committees would ensure that the organisation is grounded in the interests and priorities of groups whose voice may otherwise not be heard.

National convention

National conventions should be open to all members. The purpose of the convention would be to debate and discuss policy developments and priorities and to prepare recommendations for consideration by the board as a communiqué for comment by members. The convention would also debate issues where there are alternate views. Members would be responsible for making provisions for their own way to the Convention. It might be possible to hold the convention in conjunction with an existing conferences and events such as TheMHS and World Mental Health Day.

Member forums

Rotating the Board meetings through each state and territory would enable the Board to hold member forums and provide opportunity to engage with members throughout Australia. A range of activities could be conducted at these forums including information exchange, training, debate and discussion of issues, and policy formulation and recommendations.

Strategic partnerships

It is important that the organisation work positively and respectfully with all stakeholders in the mental health field.

National projects and consultancies

The new organisation could compete for consultancies to conduct national projects. In the early years of the new organisation the conduct of national projects will be a critical element of the organisation establishing its credibility.

Staff roles

Staffing requirements include high quality executive management (CEO), and specialist staffing in the areas of policy development, research, information technology, information and resource development, member services, media and community engagement, human resource management, financial management and administration. These roles are considered as within the basic infrastructure requirements for a viable and effective organisation. They give an indication of the organisation's core funding requirements.

The development of human resource management policies should reflect an emphasis on recruitment of staff based on requisite skills, knowledge and experience and the appointment of the best qualified applicant; an organisational commitment to staff training, development and performance review; and the proactive encouragement of mental health consumers to apply.

Establishment of strategic priorities and work plans

It is critical that the new organisation establish and work to realistic strategic objectives and work plans.

Priorities identified to date through the consultation are:

- Policies, guidelines and resources to provide or to enable the development of consumer participation and engagement nationally;
- Policies, guidelines and resources to enable the further development of mental health consumer organisations, mental health consumer run or operated services (e.g. peer and advocacy services) and the mental health consumer workforce; and
- Improving the health outcomes and equality of life for people living with mental illness by providing advice to the Australian government on:
 - the need for a national free call information line to obtain information about mental health services and how to access them;
 - employment;
 - housing;
 - income support;
 - education and training;
 - arts, lifestyle and recreation; and
 - social inclusion.

Commitment to use technology innovatively

Given the importance of technology to the new organisation's communication capacity, a significant investment in technology will be required during the establishment phase of the new organisation.

It is recommended that the new organisation ensure the employment of a staff member with high level expertise and experience in information technology. This person's role will be essential in assisting the organisation over time to utilise cost effective means to maximise communication with members and their participation in the organisation. It will also enable the effective and extensive engagement of the community.

Strategies for renewal

The new organisation will need to develop strategies for developing and sustaining its membership base and its working relationships. A strategy, based on a vibrant and visible organisational image is required for growing and diversifying membership.

It is important that the organisation reaches out to special interest groups and establishes communication strategies encompassing those consumers who do not seek organisational membership in order to decrease the risk of dependence on the input of narrowly defined interest groups. As young people and young adults are critical to future growth and sustainability, it will be important for the organisation to develop effective strategies for engaging young people.

'The new peak won't survive if it doesn't engage young people. It needs to have something that is very oriented and appealing to youth. A starting point is to consider why would young people want to be involved? An answer might be that many young people with mental illness experience loneliness and so young people might engage with the new organisation so that they can be in contact with others who share similar experiences. Technology and the creative arts might be ways of engaging young people. On-line reference groups and forums might help to get young people involved.'

Evaluation and review

Evaluation is a process of asking and answering questions about how worthwhile something is. There are several different kinds of evaluation: program evaluation, program monitoring and review, service capacity evaluation, agency focused evaluation and client focused evaluation. It is important for this new organisation to establish its evaluation priorities in terms of its establishment phase and ongoing operations.

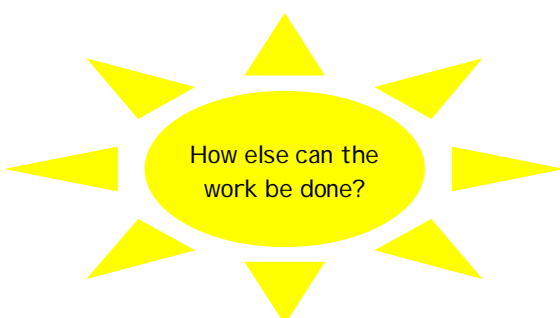
For purposes of credibility the establishment of an evaluation strategy involving a credible external evaluator which focuses on the reporting of achievements against key performance indicators and the continuous monitoring and ongoing development of strategic planning instruments is recommended.

Organisational policies and procedures

During the establishment phase of the new organisation it is essential that the board and staff develop its organisational policies and procedures. Key policy categories include human resources policies including occupational health and safety, values and code of conduct policies, board operational policies, governance policies, financial management policies, financial control policies, communications policies, conflict of interests, dispute resolution policies, privacy policies, risk management and a risk management register, acceptable use of computers, internet and email policies, description of board duties and other policies as required.

Accreditation

The organisation should demonstrate leadership in being an organisation committed to development, growth and quality by pursuing appropriate accreditation. There are many players in the Australian accreditation field however key players include the Australian Council on Health Care Standards, the Quality Improvement Council, and independent accrediting organisations such as Quality Management Services. The new organisation could consider undertaking accreditation in the following areas: good governance principles; ethical culture; corporate social responsibility; financial management; and relevant national service standards including National Disability Service Standards.



9. How would the new peak make sure it does the best it can?

Building an organisational culture of vision and excellence

Organisational culture comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values inherent in the way an organisation acts and promotes itself and its objectives. An organisation culture is required which both encompasses a positive vision for the active participation of mental health consumers in all aspects of society, and values excellence and achievement as key characteristics of the new organisation.

Key cultural elements which are likely to be value by a new mental health consumer peak organisation seeking a culture of excellence and which are reflected in the literature might include the concepts of just culture, ethical culture and socially responsible culture. These concepts are explored under headings below.

A Just Culture

A just organisational culture might be expected to incorporate additional concepts such as 'respectful', 'fair' and 'safe'. There is a significant body of research and literature about 'just organisational culture'. Morath et al (2004) revealed the key tenets to include the following:

- A just culture seeks to do no harm.
- A just culture is described as an open, fair and accountable culture where there are timely, fast and appropriate actions that are carried out equitably when blameworthy behaviour or actions have occurred.
- A just culture promotes a learning culture, designs safe systems and guides and manages the behavioural choices people make.

'Blameworthy behaviours' refer to those behaviours which are contrary to standards of practice, ethical behaviour or codes of conduct.

Accountability for having done harm is expressed through apology, disclosure and understanding what happened and why and then taking steps to reduce the probability of the harm occurring again.

A just organisation monitors the changing landscape for the possibility of harm occurring.

Although 'just culture' is a concept most often applied to sectors and fields where loss of life and serious injury through accident or mechanical malfunction is possible, its central tenants are also relevant to any community organisation. Some would argue, just culture is critical in a consumer organisation where many members or those being representative have themselves experienced trauma, disadvantage and injustice. An organisation which displays a 'just culture' also provides a model for adoption elsewhere.

An Ethical Culture underpinned by active commitment to a code of conduct

Standards Australia's AS8000-2003 Organisational Codes of Conduct aims to:

- Provide the mechanisms for an entity to establish and maintain an ethical culture through a committed, self regulatory approach; and
- Provide a framework for an effective Code of Conduct program, the performance of which can be monitored and assessed;
- In order to act as a deterrent against misconduct.

The standard identifies essential elements for an effective code of conduct which includes commitment at all levels of the organisation, leadership and modelling at Board and senior management levels, and a structure and process for continually monitoring and developing the code and educating all those affected by it.

The code itself can include a broad range of issues related to the organisation's circumstance including a supporting statement from the Board, aspirational values, conflict of interest, responsibility for dealing with stakeholders, improper use of company information, financial inducements, gifts, the use and accounting of resources, political activities, confidentiality, compliance with laws, conditions of employment, and consequences of non-compliance. The standard clearly states that a code of conduct should be drafted in consultation with stakeholders and be framed in positive terms using a personal tone and in plain English.

A Socially Responsible Culture

Standards Australia's AS 8003-2003 Corporate Social Responsibility sets out a framework for establishing for a culture and program of social responsibility within an organisation. Corporate social responsibility is defined as 'a mechanism for entities to voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their operations and interactions with stakeholders, which are over and above the entity's legal responsibilities'.

The standard identifies a broad range of issues which might be addressed through a corporate social responsibility framework including governance ethics; employee issues such as discrimination, reasonable working hours, reasonable adjustment, fair remuneration; health and safety; freedom of association; environmental and community impact.

Planning for and measuring achievements

*Do, measure, report, discuss and do again better or differently =
accountability, development and improvement.*

Importantly, time and time again the consultations emphasised the importance of the new organisation to be seen as being effective and getting early 'runs on the board.' The new organisation must be thorough in its planning processes and in communicating its plans to members and stakeholders. Along with the planning must come measuring, reporting and discussing of activities with a view to constantly improving and developing as an organisation.

Developing organisational mentors, ambassadors and champions

A further strategy for the new organisation to do the best it can is to train up and utilise the experience, expertise, talents and knowledge of members and supporters. Strategies for the development and deployment of mentors, ambassadors and champions should be established as a matter of priority.

Community engagement

'beyondblue' has had success in tapping community support from a broad cross-section of the community including businesses and philanthropic organisations and individuals. In its role of engaging the community in promoting a positive understanding of people with mental illness the new organisation must also seek to tap into wide community support and persons of influence.

Renewal

During the consultations people discussed their concerns about the sustainability of the mental health consumer organisation in Australia. Sustainability and renewal of an organisation's membership base are key to any organisation's future.

The challenge for the new organisation will be to engage with and recruit a diverse membership. Specific and appropriate strategies must be developed to enable the participation in the organisation of groups that have hitherto not participated, including Indigenous, CALD, youth, families, older persons, dual disability, forensic, rural and remote and families.

In addition to members, the organisation must be aware that there are many mental health consumers who will not seek to be directly involved with the new organisation. It is important that the organisation find ways to communicate with, and where possible engage, with this significantly large group of people.

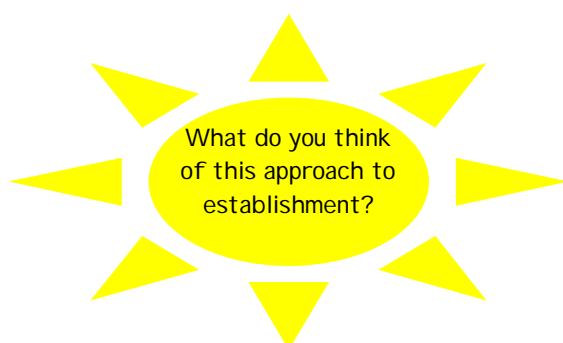


10. What are the options for the establishment phase?

The consultation stressed the need for the establishment phase of the new organisation to be transparent and open. One option for ensuring a sound establishment process is for the Department of Health and Aging to engage a suitably qualified and experienced consultancy group to support the establishment of the new organisation throughout the first 18 months and ensure its ongoing viability.

The roles and tasks needing to be undertaken during this establishment phase include:

- Establishment of the organisation's legal entity and constitution
- Establishment of its governance arrangements
- Establishment of transparent and open processes for expression of interest in becoming a member
- Establishment of a membership base
- Establishment of transparent and open processes for nominations and elections of the interim and inaugural boards
- Establishment of processes for ongoing board training as well as governance training for interested members
- Planning for board succession and renewal
- Development of organisational policies and procedures and planning for their integration into practice
- Development of the organisational code of conduct and planning for its integration into practice
- Development of organisational reporting procedures and arrangements
- Establishment of financial management and reporting arrangements
- Office establishment and equipping
- Recruitment of staff and establishment of processes for supporting staff and resourcing their professional development
- Engagement of organisational consultancy services to support management and other operational arrangements and ethical practice
- Strategic planning and development of the initial work plan
- Evaluation plan
- Planning of future resource development
- Promotion of the new organisation
- Development of strategic partnerships



11. What resourcing would be required?

Resourcing in the form of seeding funding will be required to support the establishment of the new organisation as discussed in Section 10 above.

Ongoing core funding is required to invest in sound governance, enable the appropriate employment of staff, to enable the organisation to have a national presence and to carry out its core functions including broad engagement strategies.

Project funding is required to support work in high priority areas in which early achievements can be made.



PHASE 2 – SURVEY

The questions below relate to each section of this discussion paper. We would appreciate your response and comments – please circle yes or no or the model number as appropriate.

The sections and their questions are:

SECTION 1: What would be the roles of the new peak?

QUESTION 1: Is this a good statement of roles? Yes / No

.....

.....

.....

SECTION 2: What would be its key areas of work?

QUESTION 2: Have we missed any key areas of work? Yes / No

.....

.....

.....

SECTION 3: What would it be a peak of?

QUESTION 3: Which model do you prefer? Model - 1 / 2 / 3 / 4

.....

.....

.....

SECTION 4: Where does it fit in?

QUESTION 4a: Should the constitution of the new national organisation provide for the establishment of state and local branches? Yes / No

QUESTION 4b: Are there any other important relationships we need to clarify?

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SECTION 5: What is a viable organisational framework?

QUESTION 5: Is this a viable framework? Yes / No

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SECTION 6: What sort of legal entity would work best?

QUESTION 6: Does a company limited by guarantee seem a sound way to proceed? Yes / No

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SECTION 7: How could it ensure good governance?

QUESTION 7: What else might be needed to ensure good governance?

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SECTION 8: How would it get the work done?

QUESTION 8: How else could it get the work done?

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SECTION 9: How would the new peak make sure it does the best it can?

QUESTION 9: What else is needed to make sure the peak does the best it can as well as being best it can be?

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SECTION 10: What are the options for the establishment phase?

QUESTION 10: What do you think of this approach to ensuring a sound establishment phase?

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.....

SECTION 11: What resourcing would be required?

QUESTION 11: Do you have any comments in relation to resourcing? Yes / No

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.....
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Thank you!