



E-NEWSLETTER, ISSUE #5 – MAY 2010

CEO Report

In the first half of 2010 the MHCT has been very active progressing the recommendations of the 'Growing Forward' report and lobbying at both a state and national level. Sadly not much has resulted from our, and a number of others, efforts in the mental health area. It has been quite a difficult advocacy environment at a state level with a great number of bodies working to ensure their issues get a hearing; while also waiting for the release of a number of reports and initiatives from the Commonwealth government which are going to have significant implications for the community mental health sector. I am specifically referring to the recent COAG agreements.

The biggest challenge for the MHCT and other lobbying and advocacy bodies will be to keep mental health and wellbeing on the political agenda, both for a newly configured state government and as we move towards a national election. There seems to be a definite recognition of and commitment to the importance of social inclusion to recovery for people with mental health problems, and the work that is currently done by the community mental health sector in assisting people to achieve this.

As many of you know the national scoping of the mental health workforce is underway, including the NGO sector for the first time. This is a strong indication that there is commitment to the increased provision of mental health programs through contracting of community organisations.

In December we conducted a survey of our membership and received feedback that suggests our E-Newsletter is both of appropriate structure and conversely needs to adopt a more regular mail out (as per TasCOSS and ATDC E-News). Given our current level of resourcing we are going to continue with this style, but will continue to survey satisfaction levels with this.

As the peak body, I would encourage our member organisations to contact us with any issues they would like us to lobby on.

Best wishes

Michelle Swallow

MHCT Update

The MHCT continues to conduct forums, conferences and stakeholder consultations throughout the year ensuring high quality submissions on a number of issues, including feedback on public policy. This quarter has seen members provide input into policy on mental health funding (national lobbying), the Tasmanian homelessness plan, and national work on workforce scoping and workforce development. The MHCT made a verbal submission to Housing Tasmania on the *Homelessness Plan*. We have also continued to progress work falling out from the national submission into Suicide, and will be presenting at the Senate Inquiry into Suicide Prevention later in May.

During the first few months of the year meetings with a focus on lobbying as part of the lead up to the state election, and a focus on workforce development were held with all political parties and a number of ministerial advisors from DPAC and DHHS. A number of meetings were also held with the following: Industry Skills Council; Skills Tasmania; Skills Institute; and the MHCC (NSW Peak Body). In addition to this, work was also undertaken in line with the Our Island Our Voices (OIOV) campaign ensuring that mental health and wellbeing and mental ill health were also on the political agenda.

Planning for the next MH In-Touch network meeting is underway, with the last meeting attracting over forty people from the mental health, education, training and employment sector. Debbie Hindle, National Disability Coordination Officer presented MH In-Touch at the VICSERVE conference held last week.

The CEO has been working on the establishment of the newly created community mental health CEO/Managers Network, which will meet for the first time on May 13th. The terms of reference for this group are to have a forum to develop a shared vision; have a formal mechanism for members to identify and progress key issues and initiatives which impact on mental health in Tasmania; enable information sharing and updates; is a mechanism to enable Peer Support and to host Mental Health Roundtables.

The CSO/SMHS Interface Forum Meetings have been well attended and provide a high level strategic forum to discuss and plan for issues across the mental health service system with increased communication processes between all parties. The three Regional Mental Health Groups continue with a strategic focus, in line with the new Interface Forum, as well as a focus on regional issues. The MHCT thanks the chairs for their continued role in leading the regions – Michele Hawkins (Aspire), North West; Sharon Dutton (Anglicare), North and Andree Poppleton (Aspire), South.

Upcoming Events

You are invited to the MHCT launch of: ***“From Discrimination to Social Inclusion”*** - A review of the anti stigma initiatives in mental health. Launched by Professor David Adams, Social Inclusion Commissioner, with guest speaker Lucy Lester.

When: Thursday 6 May 2010 at 11am

Where: Hadleys Hobart, 34 Murray Street, Hobart.

RSVP: By Tuesday 4 May 2010 to Gail or Cecily on 03 62249222 or admin@mhct.org. If you are unable to attend – but would like a copy of the report – please contact us.

MH In-Touch – *How do we demystify mental illness for employers and the business community?*

MH In-Touch is a network that meets twice a year to discuss how to best assist people living with a mental illness access education, training or employment. MH In-Touch aims to link mental health services providers and employment agencies.

When: 2:30 – 4:30pm Tuesday 11 May 2010

Venue: Glenorchy Civic Centre, Terry Martin Room

RSVP: by 7 May 2010 to Debbie.Hindle@utas.edu.au or ph 6226 1796

ARAFMI Tasmania together with Aspire and Richmond Fellowship are delighted to present to the Tasmanian Community, “Schizophrenia Awareness Week” (SAW)

SAW aims to build understanding and reduce stigmatisation of mental health in our community. We will focus on Schizophrenia by providing a program of interesting and knowledgeable speakers who live with schizophrenia and/or care for people who have Schizophrenia.



The key speaker is Sandy Jeffs. Sandy has Schizophrenia, is a renowned author, poet and speaker and is sure to delight the crowd with her humour and by sharing her lived experience of mental illness. Sandy will be accompanied by local GPs, mental health practitioners and carers. Questions from the audience are welcome and there will be an opportunity to meet speakers over cake and coffee.

Sessions will be held in Launceston (16-17th), Devonport (18th), Burnie (18th) and Hobart (20-21st) May.

To RSVP for Northern and North Western Venues please call ASPIRE on 6333 3111. To RSVP in the South please call ARAFMI Tasmania on 62287448.

As these events are catered for an RSVP is essential. RSVP is by Friday the 14th May, 2010.

If hard copies of flyers are required please contact south@arafmitas.org.au

“Investing in Tasmania’s Mental Health” Conference.

Anglicare Tasmania Inc. and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania are conducting the “*Investing in Tasmania’s Mental Health*” Conference on the **3rd and 4th of June 2010**. Registrations open shortly – please mark the dates in your calendar. Please forward this information to anyone who has an interest in mental health in your networks:

Who might be interested in attending?

- + Mental health workers and mental health services management
- + Community service and other government services
- + Consumers
- + Carers
- + Students
- + Volunteers
- + Government decision makers and leaders
- + Local Government Community Development
- + People who care about Tasmania’s mental health

SANE Australia - in Focus

SANE Research on Social Inclusion

The Australian Government places a high priority on ‘social inclusion’. But how well are people living with a mental illness ‘included’ in our society?

A new Research Bulletin by SANE Australia aims to find out. We want to hear directly from people about their day-to-day experiences, so please encourage as many people as you can to complete this survey.

The Research Bulletin will outline recommendations which will be raised with decision-makers. Results will be published in July 2010.
To complete or view the survey [click here >>](#)

SANE Australia's Media Centre Resource

The SANE Media Centre has developed a range of comprehensive [factsheets](#) to assist the mental health sector in working with the media.

The [Tips on being interviewed by the media](#) factsheet provides information on how to best represent your organisation and remain relaxed during interviews.

Preparation:

- Firstly, consider whether you are best placed to respond, never feel obliged to do an interview
- Develop key messages to convey, no more than three
- Consider tricky questions and work out some answers
- Have in mind relevant statistics or key findings.

During the interview:

- Speak in short, succinct phrases, avoid 'ums' & 'ahs' and technical terms, pause before answering
- Smile, regardless of the medium
- Stick to your words rather than the ones chosen by the journalist
- Remember not all your comments will be used so continually work in your key messages.

The Community Services Excellence Award, launched on 1 May 2010 – nominations close 11 June 2010.

A new state-wide awards program has been developed which will be known as the “**Community Services Excellence Awards**” to recognise dedicated efforts of individuals and organisations in the broader area that DCYFS now covers. Community sector organisations and the public sector in the areas of family support, disability services, youth, child health, child protection, juvenile justice and out of home care are encouraged to submit nominations for individuals, groups or programs that are providing an outstanding contribution to vulnerable children, youth families and people with disabilities. The Community Services Excellence Awards will consist of three individual categories and awardees will receive \$1,000 together with a “Trophy of Distinction”. Information packs are available on the [Reform Implementation Units website](#). Nominations close 11 June 2010.

Do you have something to contribute?

If you'd like to be featured here, please [submit to us](#) an article of no more than 500 words (and maybe a picture or two!).

If you do not wish to be on the mailing list for this e-news, please [contact us](#) and we will remove you from our list.

Michelle Swallow

CEO

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The peak body representing the community mental health sector in Tasmania at a state and national level

