



E-NEWSLETTER, ISSUE #2 - MAY 2009

Welcome

I cannot believe how quickly time has elapsed since the Inaugural E-News, indicating that another quarter of a year has already passed us by. This can only mean we have been very busy! The policy forum *Tasmania's Opportunity to Destigmatise Mental Illness* and most recently the *2009 Suicide Prevention Conference* have both been very successful events – but more on those later.

This E-News coincides with Michelle's very well deserved break, and we hope she's having a great time! Michelle will be back in June. In the mean time, please don't hesitate to contact us here at the MHCT with any queries or concerns, and we will do our best to help.

I hope that you enjoy our second E-News. This is about communicating with you, so if there is something missing, something you would like us to include, please remember to [contact us](#).

Best Wishes

Adele

MHCT Update

As you will all be aware, the Office for the Community Sector's reform agenda has continued to be progressed. Recently the MHCT contributed through the Peak's Network to calls for input into the Quality and Safety Standards Framework and the Integrated Finance and Performance Framework. For those of you funded by DHHS you have no doubt received an 'exposure draft' service agreement which is based on these frameworks. This is an interesting time for the community sector, and certainly time for us to evaluate how we want to interact with government and position ourselves for the future.

Shortly we will be submitting our response to the Review of Tasmania DHHS-Funded Peak Bodies, as well as providing input to the Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy. The MHCT has been encouraging as many organisations as possible to participate in the development of this strategy. Consumer engagement in service delivery is integral, and it is essential that the voice from the mental health sector is strong. The deadline for the first round of consultations is 12 May 2009. You may have missed this round, but please note that consultation will be ongoing.

We have been particularly busy with our inaugural policy forum and suicide prevention conference, two successful events that will assist the MHCT in consolidating priority mental health issues for further development.

13 March 2009: *Tasmania's Opportunity to Destigmatise Mental Illness*

Held at the Bahai'i Centre, over 30 stakeholders attended this important policy forum. Jeff Cheverton (Churchill Fellow; Executive Director Queensland Alliance; MHCA Board Member) commenced the day with his moving presentation about various social marketing campaigns that have been successful internationally. Jeff's presentation was followed by a panel discussion about the issue from a local perspective. In the afternoon attendees were put hard to work in workshop based activities. These were primarily focused on developing recommendations for reducing the stigma associated with mental illness

in Tasmania (and indeed nationally). More information, including photos from the day and recommendations that were made are available on our [website](#).

28-29 April 2009: 2009 Suicide Prevention Conference Let's Work Together – Life is for Living!

Over 130 delegates from around Australia attended this two day conference at the Hotel Grand Chancellor. The conference was hugely successful, facilitating discussion between a wide variety of stakeholders and focussing on recommendations to improve the high suicide rate in Tasmania. We were delighted to have two very exciting keynote speakers, Professor Diego De Leo (Professor of Psychiatry, Griffith University; Director, Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention) and Merryn Statham (Director, Suicide Prevention Information New Zealand). The conference also included a cocktail reception, with Leonie Young (CEO, *beyondblue*) guest speaking. Concurrent sessions throughout the conference included a range of informative presentations and interactive workshops.

The success of this event would not have been possible without the help of a lot of people, and to the organising committee, those who chaired sessions, panel members and all those delegates who chose to attend, thank you! Thank you for your help, support and commitment to preventing suicide in Tasmania.

More information, including photos, presentations and recommendations will be available online shortly.

Members

Our [membership](#) continues to grow, and is currently at 25 organisations.

The mission of the MHCT is to represent the interests of the community mental health sector, including consumer organisations, carer organisations and service provider organisations, therefore providing a public voice for people affected by a mental illness and the organisations that work with them. We advocate for and influence public policy on mental health. Our vision is for a vibrant and effective community mental health sector in Tasmania.

Your voices, and your vision, are important to us.

Upcoming Events

Please continue to [contact us](#) with details of what is happening in the sector so we can update our [Events Calendar](#). All your information about the event can be uploaded into the calendar, including any advertising information.

21 May 2009: MH In-Touch

3.30pm-5.30pm, Thursday 21 May 2009 - Amenities Room, Level 2, 99 Bathurst Street

Don't miss the opportunity to get together with consumers, employment networks, mental health service providers as well as the education and training sector for an afternoon of networking, information sharing and maybe even debate! This event is open to anyone who is interested in assisting mental health service consumers gain employment and/or participate in education and training. This is a **FREE** afternoon, including drinks and nibbles! Where else do you have to be?

RSVPs are required by 15 May 2009 to Debbie Hindle (Debbie.Hindle@utas.edu.au; 6226 1796).

12 June 2009: Workforce Development, Planning and Innovation Forum

In March 2009 the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) contracted maree fudge to map the community mental health sector workforce and to work with members to identify practical innovations and actions to addressing the labour and skills shortages facing the mental health sector.

On Friday June 12th 09 maree will facilitate a forum bringing members and other key stakeholders together to identify some innovative solutions and actions to the skills and labour challenges our sector is facing. The full day forum will be held at the Punchbowl Christian Centre in Launceston.

We will start the day with future needs scanning, identify the relevant workforce needs, look at the barriers and identify some solutions and actions. Members will come away with new ideas for workforce development and planning for your own organisations as well as developing strategic action for workforce planning for our sector.

A full agenda and details will be provided over the coming weeks. However please feel free to RSVP directly to maree at any time - mareefudge@me.com or 0416-244-241

Numbers may be limited so put Friday June 12th 09 in your diaries now!

Sector in Focus

Helping carers! The 'Building Capacity in Community Mental Health Family Support and Carer Respite' Project

The Building Capacity in Community Mental Health Family Support and Carer Respite Project (the Project), funded by the Australian Government's FaHCSIA - Mental Health Respite Program, is designed to enable new service provision in family support and carer respite.

Many gaps in carer service provision had been identified prior to and during the Project, including services for mental health carers other than older parents, gaps in remote services and a lack in services providing information, skills and support. Carers would also report that there was little available for the person they were caring for to do during the day. In Tasmania, the Project is building regional networks of community mental health family service providers and encouraging shared pathways for information and referral. By working more collaboratively, services can improve referral pathways.

In addition, in each jurisdiction organisations have held discussions about forming partnerships with other community service organisations; capitalising on their complementary strengths and designing services to address service gaps. Partnerships have more capacity to provide a more integrated and comprehensive service to the whole.

The project has been focussing on the second round of funding through this initiative. Round One focussed on providing older parent carers with discrete episodes of respite. Following feedback from Project Coordinators, FaHCSIA have broadened some of the eligibility requirements for the Round Two tender, thus allowing a greater range of carers to be able to access respite services, including further information and support.

Workforce issues remain a difficulty of the sector. Therefore the Project will work with maree fudge, contracted by the MHCT, who is conducting research into the community mental health sector's workforce from development, planning and innovation perspectives. As an initial step in the project, maree has completed an issues paper, which can be downloaded from our [website](#). This paper provides an overview of the key issues relating to workforce, the environment impacting on the community mental health sector and starts the discussion about innovations in workforce planning and development. maree is currently interviewing providers, carer and consumer members which is uncovering some of the needs and we expect to learn much more about this area when we receive maree's next report in June 2009.

The Tasmanian Project Coordinator has begun a state-wide email network to disseminate events, notices and training opportunities and offers a service directory to service providers in the field. The Project will cease at the end of October 2009; if your organisation is interested in joining the carer services network, please contact me soon -

Anne Bevan on 6224 9222 or email abevan@mhct.org.

Member in Focus



***The Hobart Clinic
Amanda Quealy, Chief Executive Officer***

The Hobart Clinic is a not for profit private organisation managed by a community Board. We have been providing mental health treatment, care

and rehabilitation services for over 30 years. As a statewide service provider we provide treatment and support services to people from all regions across Tasmania.

The Hobart Clinic consists of a purpose-built building with a twenty seven bed in-patient unit, a day program and Doctors consulting suite. All in-patients have a single room with ensuite. The Clinic is set on seven acres of landscaped gardens, offering a tranquil environment conducive to optimum recovery. Our in-patient services provide short term treatment for a range of mental health conditions including: depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug dependence, major mental illnesses and post traumatic stress disorder. We have a number of group rooms in which to accommodate our day therapy program which focuses on recovery and rehabilitation with individual counselling, group activities and therapy programs. Our on-site Consulting Suite supports five Consultant Psychiatrists who provide assessment and treatment for both in-patient and outpatients. The Hobart Clinic is accredited under the Australian Council on Health Care Standards and in our most recent audit in 2008, we achieved 'Excellent Achievement' in a number of areas of our service.

I commenced as CEO in February 2008, I have worked in the health care industry since 1986 within the government, private and not-for-profit sectors. Prior to moving to Tasmania I was Head of Strategy & Development for Australian Unity, Aged and Retirement Services. My academic background includes degrees in Economics, Accountancy, Social Work and post graduate qualifications in Health Services Administration.

We have developed a new strategic direction and worked on The Clinic developing closer working relationships with both government and community organisations to expand our service provision. One such new initiative is for Carers of People with a Mental Illness. We will shortly roll out new education and support program for carers in partnership with Carers Tasmania and Carerlinks.

As a value based organisation, The Clinic remains committed to participating in community education activities and this year will again play a lead role in Mental Health Week in Hobart. Mental Health Day at the Gardens will focus on youth and early intervention and prevention.

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.

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

