



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

NETWORK NEWS

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From left to right: Minister for Health and Wellbeing Meegan Fitzharris MLA, Chief Psychiatrist Denise Riordan, Jenny Adams, Terri Warner, Dalane Drexler, MHJHADS Executive Director Katrina Bracher

The Network is very pleased to announce that the My Rights, My Decisions Program was the category winner in the 2018 Quality in Healthcare ACT Awards. My Rights, My Decisions was nominated in the 'person-centred' category. The Awards recognise leadership and innovation in healthcare in the Australian Capital Territory, with individuals and teams nominated for projects undertaken in the last 12 months. The person-centred category recognises projects that put people and their families at the centre of decisions about planning, developing and monitoring care.

From the EO's Desk



Dear Readers

Welcome to the final edition of the Network News for 2018.

Firstly, I would like to welcome our 2018-19 Board who were elected at our Annual General Meeting on 20 November. Following elections, we had two casual vacancies to be filled by the Board in accordance with the Constitution. Since the AGM, one of these vacancies has been filled, so only one now remains. If you

are interested in nominating yourself for the vacant position, please email me on executive@actmhc.org.au or call 02 6230 5796 and I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

We were pleased to be able to continue the My Rights, My Decisions education program designed to educate consumers, carers, Health staff and the broader community about decision-making tools under the *Mental Health Act 2015* (ACT). We look forward to continuing this project through until June 2019, and hope that more permanent funding will be assigned to ensuring this incredibly important program continues and expand into the future.

2019 is the Network's 20th birthday of incorporation, we are looking at holding our birthday celebration during next year's Mental Health Month. We will be forming a working party early in the year to start planning processes; if you are interested in being involved please contact me on the details provided above.

As always, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Network's staffing team, without whom none of the great work we do would be possible. Purity, Jen, Petra and Val continue to provide caring, professional supports to consumers to enable them to participate in ways that suit their needs. We look forward to continuing to grow our methods of gathering and utilising consumer concerns and feedback over the coming year. In addition, this year we have enjoyed working with Jenny Adams who developed the My Rights, My Decisions program; Pema Choden who has been providing administrative support to the Network's key program areas; and Terri Warner who has fulfilled a variety of support roles over the year including facilitating our education programs while Petra was away for an extended period, formulating policy responses during Purity's time away, and even pulling together this very newsletter that you are reading!

Finally, this year the Network and MHCC ACT Consumer Carer Caucus' annual end of year BBQ was held on Thursday 13 December. It was fantastic to see so many members and Caucus members together to see out 2018.

Until next time, thank you for reading and for all the fantastic work our members do to improve the lot of consumers throughout the ACT.

- Dalane Drexler

Membership

Following the distribution of documents for our Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Network was contacted by some members to notify us that they no longer wish to receive communications from the Network.

Whilst we are happy to comply with these requests in regard to regular communications, we are legally obligated, under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* (ACT), to send AGM documentation to all members regardless of communication preferences.

In order to reduce distress to members, if there comes a time when you would prefer to receive no communications from the Network, not even AGM documentation once per year, we recommend that you cancel your membership. While we value our members, we would prefer not to cause unnecessary distress. If you cancel your membership then later change your mind, it is a quick and easy process to re-join the Network.

Membership cancellation advice must be made in writing, directed to the Executive Officer, clearly stating your name, the address or email listed on your membership, and your wish to cancel membership effective immediately. Advice can be submitted by post to PO Box 469 Civic Square ACT 2608; email to executive@actmhc.org.au; SMS to 0406 457 557; or by hand to our office.

Chair's Report

I'd like to thank Chris Corcoran, the Deputy Chair, for taking over my duties while I have been delivering training for the past few months. My leave of absence from the Board ended at the AGM, so I have already had the opportunity to meet the 2018-19 Board. Many thanks also to the outgoing and continuing Board members for all of their work in the past year.

During my leave of absence I had the opportunity to attend two mental health conferences - The Mental Health Services Learning Network Annual Conference and the 2nd Annual Mental Health and NDIS Conference, and two conferences that were not specific to mental health – Civil Society Australia's Fixing the NDIS Conference and HealtheVoices, which brings together advocates who have, or wish to develop, an online presence.

Stepping outside of the mental health sector is a useful thing to do, because it provides insight into what challenges we share, and what is specific to mental health. It gives us opportunities to learn, and to educate, both of which are vital components of advocacy.

I've always found it odd that people say things start to wind down towards the end of the year. This may be true in terms of structured activities like work and study, but they are not the whole of who we are and what we do. In fact, for some people with mental health concerns, losing those structured activities can be a source of stress, as can the increase in social activities associated with the holiday season, or conversely the isolation that comes with it. It's important to know how this time of year affects you, and to have supports in place that will assist you to have a safe and restful break.

- Terri Warner
Chair



As well as running another popular A Beary Lovely Morning, the Network took part in the Mental Health Month Expo in Garema Place. Thanks to the Consumer Reps who helped us out on the day, and to everyone who contributed to making Mental Health Month such a success in 2018!

Network Update

My Rights, My Decisions

On 5 December, the Network's My Rights, My Decisions (MRMD) program was announced as the winner of the Person-centred category of the Quality in Healthcare ACT Awards 2018, run by ACT Health. This is a real testimony to the collaborative approach taken to develop the MRMD program, which encompassed several consumer forums, input from ACT Health, ADACAS, ACT Human Rights Commission, Legal Aid ACT and Carers ACT. The Network proudly displays this award in its office, so please have a look next time you are here.

Next year's calendar of MRMD training is still being developed. As was the case in 2018, each course is free and will be held over two Fridays, from 11am-2pm, with a light lunch included.

The first session covers consumer rights under the *Mental Health Act 2015* (ACT), and concepts such as decision-making capacity and supported decision-making. It also includes guest speakers from ADACAS, the ACT Human Rights Commission, and Legal Aid ACT.

The second session covers detailed information about the MRMD form kit, including Nominated Person, Advance Agreement and Advance Consent Direction, allowing you to develop a draft ready for discussion and signoff by your treating mental health practitioner.

The Network strongly encourages consumers to put a MRMD form kit in place if it is possible that you may experience reduced decision-making capacity and be hospitalised in the future. The form kit allows you to express your views while you have decision-making capacity, and this can then be taken into account by your treating team if you are later hospitalised with reduced decision-making capacity.

Your views can cover a range of matters including your mental health treatment; your mental health medications; who should or should not receive

information about you; what may help you if you become stressed; what things, such as past experiences or cultural background, you would like your treating team to know about; who should look after your dependents and pets if you have them; and who you would like to advocate for you. You discuss your views with your current treating practitioner while you have decision-making capacity, and come to an agreement that gets signed off. Your MRMD form kit is then loaded onto the ACT Health system by your treating practitioner, if you are an ACT Health consumer; or, if you are not an ACT Health consumer, your private practitioner can send it to ACT Health for uploading, with your permission. Instructions for your practitioner are located on the back page of the form kit.

Ideally, consumers are encouraged to attend the Network's MRMD training. This way you can get more information on what your rights are, how to complete your form kit, and who can help you if your wishes are not followed. You will also receive a keyring and a fold out card that you can carry with you containing phone numbers of those you would like to be contacted if you are hospitalised, as well as other important information you would like those treating you to know.

For 2019 it is anticipated that MRMD training will be held every two months. Dates will be advertised on the Network website, as well as in Newsletters and Bulletins. You will need to register by emailing peer.education@actmhc.org.au or calling 6230 5796, and indicating whether you have any dietary requirements.

Vacancy on the Policy Reference Group

Are you keen to engage in systemic policy work? We are seeking one consumer to join our Policy Reference Group. The role of the Policy Reference Group is to provide expertise and advice regarding the policy program. The functions of the Policy Reference Group include but are not limited to;

- Monitor, support and review projects.
- Provide a forum to discuss potential new projects and opportunities.
- Design the biannual survey and put outcomes into actions.
- Make recommendations in relation to projects where required.
- Celebrate successes.

Meetings take place on a quarterly basis and members of the group will be reimbursed. If you would like more information or would like to express your interest, contact Purity by email to policy@actmhc.org.au, SMS on 0406 457 557 or by calling 6230 5796. Closing date: Monday 28 January 2019.

Submissions

The Network developed and submitted a formal submission for the *Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services*. Through this submission, the Network raised concerns raised by consumer representatives through their roles, the increasing rates of seclusion and restraint; the fishbowl effect of the reception area at the Adult Inpatient Mental health unit. The Network made several recommendations including implementation of the Safewards model to reduce restrictive practices and increase safety for all at inpatient units. The Network also recommended that My Rights, My Decisions project be adequately funded and implemented throughout ACT Health Services and ACT Health Directorate.

On the 26 November 2018, the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services (Committee), tabled its report on the *Implementation, Performance and Governance of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the ACT* (Inquiry), in the Legislative Assembly. This report examines the operation of the National

Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in order to ensure people with disability are supported and empowered. The Network contributed to this inquiry through its submission and we are pleased to see a number of our concerns highlighted throughout the report. The full report can [be found here](#).

Safewards

The Network alongside other mental health stakeholders in the ACT and the Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (PACYPC) have been advocating for the implementation of Safewards model in the ACT as an avenue to making inpatient units safer for everyone. Safewards is an evidence-based clinical model developed in the UK to promote safer, less coercive practices in mental health care and to reduce incidents of conflict involving consumers and staff. For more information on Safewards visit www.safewards.net or [Health Victoria](#) (search Safewards).

Lifespan

LifeSpan is a new, evidence-based, integrated approach to suicide prevention in the ACT. LifeSpan involves the simultaneous implementation of nine key strategies that have been shown to reduce suicide into one community-led approach. As a key component of LifeSpan, the first ACT Suicide Prevention Collaborative was held on Thursday 29 November 2018.

Anyone with an interest in suicide prevention was welcome to attend, the Network attended including a number of our members and other mental health stakeholders. The new Coordinator-General for the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Dr Elizabeth Moore, was also there. The Collaborative is an important opportunity for members of the community to get together to network, share information and discuss matters relating to suicide prevention. If you would like to find out more about Lifespan, please contact the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing on 02 6205 2920 or OfficeforMHW@act.gov.au alternatively you can visit <https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/research/lifespan>

If you would like to contribute ideas or suggestions for the policy program for 2019, please contact Purity Goj by email to policy@actmhc.org.au, SMS on 0406 457 557 or by calling 6230 5796.

Thank you to all who have supported the policy program throughout 2018, we wish you a safe festive season.

Community Education Program

After some time away, Petra came back into the office at the end of October to resume delivering, developing and reviewing training. We are very grateful to Terri for delivering training during this time!

We have been planning for 2019, and it looks like it will be a very busy year for our training program! You'll notice a few new offerings on the training calendar for 2019 – we are very excited to be offering **Mentoring Training** for consumer reps as well as a short workshop on **Preparing for Your NDIS Review**.

We recently completed another round of Self-Advocacy and Consumer Representation Training, followed by Co-Facilitation Training. These were facilitated by Terri. As a result, we now have 2 new qualified co-facilitators who we hope you will get the chance to meet when you attend training next year.

In November, experienced Consumer Representatives had a chance to participate in the Pilot course for our Mentoring Workshop! This workshop has been a while in the making, so it's great to get it to this stage. It is a one day workshop that from now on will be a requirement for any Consumer Representatives who want to volunteer as mentors.

A fun way to finish off the training year was with our last Co-facilitator Quarterly Catch-up. This was a great way to share information, increase co-facilitation skills, and celebrate our achievements for 2018! We all enjoyed the treats!

A big thank-you to all our co-facilitators for the great job they did in 2018! We look forward to working with you and exploring new training opportunities in 2019!

The 2019 training year will start in February with **Self-Advocacy** training, and a **Consumer Representation Training Development Discussion Group**. Regular discussion groups are scheduled in 2019. These are an opportunity for members to contribute to the content of training and explore ways of improving the training outlines and resources.

Events Scheduled in early 2019:

Self-Advocacy Training

Mondays Feb 4 – Mar 4 2019, 11:00 – 1:30

Consumer Representation Training Development Discussion Group

Thursday, Feb 28 2019, 1:00 – 2:30

Consumer Representation Training

Mondays, Mar 18 – April 15 2019, 11:00 – 1:30

As always, you're welcome to contact Petra to ask questions about any of the training we offer, by phone on (02) 62305796 or email education@actmhc.org.au



My Rights, My Decisions: winner of the Person-centred category of the Quality in Healthcare ACT Awards 2018.



We were pleased to participate in two charity events recently: the Share the Dignity Project's 'It's in the Bag' campaign, which aims to provide women experiencing homelessness, domestic violence and poverty with a handbag full of essential items (left); and the PANDSI Morning Tea (right), which was a joint event with the MHCC ACT and MIEACT, held to raise money during Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Awareness Week.

Consumer Rep Program

Our consumer representatives continue their committee work, ensuring that mental health consumers are involved in making decisions that affect them. We were very pleased to celebrate their achievements at the final CRP Forum for the year, which was held on the 27th of November. The new processes for the Forum are working well and have reinforced our existing measures for managing the information shared at Forums. Thanks to all of our reps for assisting us to implement the new measures and for demonstrating their ongoing commitment to confidentiality. The following appointments have been made to committees recently:

- MAJIC-eR Advisory Group – Bianca Rossetti
- UCH Management of Deteriorating Patient – Jenny Hodgson
- Adolescent Mental Health Unit Working Group - Bianca Rossetti
- DECMHOP Steering Committee – Rose Beard
- UCH Facility Wide Operational Working Group – Peter Dwyer
- Policy, Procedure and Quality Committee – Bianca Rossetti
- ACACIA Advisory Group – Jane Grace
- ACT Lifespan Steering Committee – Patricia Green
- UCH Facility Wide Operational Meeting – Peter Dwyer

Vacancies

There are five upcoming vacancies with applications closing on **11 January 2019**. Information about the vacancies is on pages 12 and 13.

1. Consumer and Carer Feedback and Quality Committee
2. Access and Acute Collaborative Engagement Forum
3. Seclusion and Restraint Review Meeting Co-Chair
4. Consumer Handouts Committee
5. Adult Community Mental Health Model of Care Steering Committee.



2018 Five Year Dedicated Service Award to the Consumer Rep Program, Thi-Nha Tran

Network Events

DROP-IN AND OFFICE CLOSURE FOR THE CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PERIOD

Drop-In has now closed for 2018 and will reopen at 10 am on Thursday 10 January 2019.



Network staff Petra, Pema, Purity, Jen, Deigh, and Jenny (from left) wish all our members a safe festive season.

Dec

Friday 21 December to Wednesday 02 January, inclusive *Office Closed*

Jan

Thursday 10 January

Drop-In reopens, 10 am -1 pm

Monday 28 January

Australia Day Public Holiday *Office Closed*

Feb

Monday 4 February 11am—1:30pm

Self-Advocacy training term one commences, Members' Area

Monday 26 February 11am—1:00pm

First CRP Forum for 2019, Members' Area

Upcoming Training

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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31						

APRIL

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MAY

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JUNE

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30						

Key:

Public Holidays 

Workshops/Training:

Self-Advocacy 

Consumer Representation



Understanding the NDIS for Peer Workers 

Preparing for my NDIS Review Workshop 

Co-Facilitation 

Mentoring 

Other Events:

Graduation 

Training Design Discussion Group 

To register for any of these courses, complete and return the registration form on page 19

Self-Advocacy Training

Mondays, 4, 11, 18 & 25 Feb and 4 March 2019
(11am– 1:30)

Supports mental health consumers to:

- Feel good about themselves
- Express their feelings
- Recognise the importance of responsible decision-making
- Make informed decisions

Consumer Representation Training

Mondays 18 & 25 March and 1, 8 & 15 April, 2019
(11am – 1:30)

Educates mental health consumers about:

- Consumer Representation
- The consumer movement and systemic change
- The importance of human rights and legislation
- Committee skills

Mental Health Month Awards

The Mental Health Month Awards Ceremony was held 9 October 2018 at the Legislative Assembly, with the Minister for Mental Health, Shane Rattenbury, presenting the Awards. The two ACT Mental Health Consumer Network awards, the Michael Firestone Memorial Scholarship and the David Perrin Award, were also presented during this ceremony.

The Michael Firestone Memorial Scholarship was established in recognition of Michael's tireless efforts in assisting mental health consumers through information, education and referral, as well as his long personal battle with an education provider regarding his own issues of discrimination. This Scholarship is to assist those with a mental illness to further their studies, contributing towards the costs of tools, equipment and/or course costs. The ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Board agreed to increase the number of Michael Firestone Memorial Scholarships from two to three, worth up to \$500 each – so watch out for the Scholarship being advertised in 2019 and apply.

The two Michael Firestone Memorial Scholarships were awarded to two very different candidates - Delia Quigly and Siân Jackson.



As 2018 ACT Senior Volunteer of the Year for her work for Diversity ACT and Lifeline, Delia Quigly is a retired AFP officer who served as a peacekeeper in Timor Leste, Cyprus, Sudan, Haiti and on

assistance missions in Jordan & the Solomon Islands.

Stemming from her role is the AFP, she is living with PTSD and a number of other medical conditions. Delia is now undertaking Graduate Diploma in Relationships Counselling. She has been studying counselling part-time for the last three years, with the goal of providing free or low-cost counselling to low income clients of Diversity A.C.T. The funds from this scholarship would allow Delia to pay off her remaining course fees, providing needed funds to assist financial decisions in other areas.



Siân Jackson is a young woman living with terminal illness and the comorbidity of mental illnesses as a flow on effect of that condition. Despite the very raw deal her genetics have handed her, she is a source of light, joy and inspiration for all who know her. She uses physical performance as one component of her physical and mental health management strategy.

Siân has recently begun to explore circus performance as another field of artistic endeavour – you may have seen her in the recent production of Barnam, Tuggeranong. Her long term goal is to study at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) and this scholarship will be used to purchase circus equipment to assist with auditions for NICA.

The David Perrin Award is presented in memory of David Perrin – an individual with multiple disabilities who made his mark in mental health services. It is awarded to a mental health consumer who lives an independent and self-determined life, while negotiating complex mental illness. The 2018 David Perrin Award was awarded to Rose Beard. Rose lives with, and negotiates, complex mental illness, disability and chronic illness related to an ongoing battle with cancer. In addition, Rose is heavily involved in the caring of her adult son who lives with severe autism and mental illness. Rose is a force of nature, participating in all areas of the ACT Mental Health Community. Rose chaired the Consumer and Carer Caucus for two years, is an active mental health consumer representative through the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network and has worked with Carers ACT for 15 years. Rose is also a sought after live speaker, speaking at National events such as 2018 TheMHS Conference. Rose was in Australia's initial "This Is My Brave" event held in Canberra and provides extensive support for James, like when she played 'Santa's helper' to James's Santa for Kairos Outside for Women, for kids whose parent was incarcerated. Congratulations Rose!



The Network congratulates Delia, Siân and Rose as well as all the Award winners: **2018 Mental Health Month Consumer Award** - Matthew Martin; **2018 Mental Health Month Carer Award** - Natalie Malcomson; **Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Award** - Menslink; **Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Award** Certificate of Commendation – Tony Baker from OZ Help Foundation; **2018 Reciprocity Award** – Katrina McLean; **2018 Mental Health Month Volunteer Award** - Eunice Jolliffe, Ros Williams and Ann Finlay.



Consumer Representative Program Vacancies

The following vacancies are for established committees where the current representative will shortly finish their two year term. Note that these vacancies close **January 11 2019**.

Consumer and Carer Feedback and Quality Committee (Feb 19)

Reporting to the Clinical Effectiveness Committee, the Consumer and Carer Feedback and Quality Committee monitors and implements the two way feedback system and, as a result, develops quality initiatives.

The functions of the Consumer and Carer Feedback and Quality Committee include overseeing the implementation of an agreed two way feedback system and review the feedback received. Examine systemic, and develop quality, issues raised from feedback, and from any feedback received, develop key improvements or quality initiatives.

There are two consumer representatives on this Committee so it is a good Committee for those who may not have the confidence of undertaking a Health Directorate Committee on their own.

Meetings: second Monday of the month **Duration:** 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Location: Tribunal Room, AMHU.

Access and Acute Collaborative Engagement Forum (Feb 19)

Reporting to the MHJHADS Safety, Quality and Risk Management Committee, the AMHS Collaborative Engagement Forum engages the community mental health sector in a governance partnership to support the oversight of the Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU) with the aim of developing and improving strategies to better support the transition of people admitted to the AMHU back into the community sector.

A large Committee, with approximately 25 organisations in the membership, so will suit a consumer representative who enjoys working in a detail focused committee.

Meetings: second Tuesday, every 2 months **Duration:** 11.30am – 12.30pm

Location: Tribunal Room, AMHU.

Seclusion and Restraint Review Meeting Co-Chair (Mar 19)

This committee has the key role to extensively review all incidents of seclusion and restraint, code black and Early Support & Intervention Team (ES&IT) in both the Adult Mental Health Unit and the Emergency Department Short Stay Mental Health Unit. Reviews of incidents of seclusion and restraint include (but are not limited to) an overview of consumer's admission to date, medications offered/given/requested, description of incident, staff skill mix on unit at the time, details of seclusion order, post seclusion support and seclusion reporting compliance.

Please note that this role will provide you with access to very sensitive information that you will not be able to discuss with people outside of the meeting room unless advised. The information may be distressing at times, so please consider these two things when deciding whether to nominate. Please ensure that you address these issues in your nomination.

There is one other consumer representative on this Committee in the role of co-Chair.

Meetings: third Friday each month

Duration: 10.30am – 12noon

Location: Room 2, AMHU

Consumer Representative Program Vacancies

Consumer Handouts Committee (Mar 19)

The Consumer Handouts Committee provides governance for the initiation, consolidation and development of consumer handouts for ALL aspects of health, not just mental health. The Committee aims to provide leadership and advice for development and review of Consumer Handouts, reporting to Standard 2 (Partnering with Consumers). In addition, To the Committee ensures externally sourced sites meet the four criteria in the Consumer Handouts Policy and ensure permission for use by ACT Health is acquired appropriately when required.

If you are interested in the way information is provided to consumers in the handout form and have an interest in reading and commenting on individual pieces of work, then this Committee is for you!

Meetings: third Thursday of each month

Duration: 4pm to 5pm

Location: Moore Street

Adult Community Mental Health Model of Care Steering Committee (Mar 19)

The Model of Care Committee provides strategic direction and service leadership to ensure the successful development and implementation of the Adult Community Mental Health Services (ACMHS) Model of Care (Moc). The ACMHS MoC Steering Committee coordinates recommendations from all working groups to support an integrated mental health service which is contemporary, evidence based and recovery oriented. As well as endorsing the final ACMHS MoC, and approve the transition require for implementation, this committee also makes recommendations for the rollout of the MoC and the service-wide communication strategy.

If you enjoy fast paced meetings, with ample reading material that needs to be done prior to the meeting, then this could be your ideal Committee. High level health directorate staff are involved and outcomes are the major focus.

Meetings: first Monday of each month **Duration:** 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Location: Lvl 3 Moore Street, Large Conference Room

Adolescent Mental Health Unit Model of Care Working Group (Jan 19)

This working group informs and oversees the development of the Models of Care and Health Planning Unit Brief for the development of a new Adolescent Mental Health Unit (AdMHU) and associated services. It achieves this through consideration of the clinical, technical and operational issues and requirements of the Adolescent Unit at the Canberra Hospital. Some of the duties will include identifying project deliverables inclusive of issues that require a decision affecting scope, budget, time or quality aspects of the project; co-ordinate the collection, validation and relay of Working requirements and information to the ADMHU PCG and Monitor Working requirements so that planning milestones and timeframes can be met. The AdMHU WG will work within the brief provided to it from the Mental Health Justice Health Alcohol and Drug Service (MHJHADS) Executive Director.

This is a great vacancy for either a new or experienced consumer representative that is interested in participating in the very, very early stages of both the concrete and policy aspects of the development of a new mental health unit.

Meetings: fortnightly (last scheduled 15 Jan)

Duration: 1.5 hours

Location: Lvl 3 Moore Street, Large Conference Room

Event Highlights



A Beary Lovely Morning



Left: Jenny presenting about My Rights, My Decisions at the MHJHADS End of Year Forum.

Right: Matthew Martin from the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, presenting at the AGM.



Left: Tony and Phil enjoying a brotherly hug over lunch.

Centre: Jen and Purity busily cooking sausages.

Right: Network friends enjoying good conversation and tasty food.

End of Year Barbeque



2018 Consumer Survey Results

Every two years, the Network undertakes a consumer survey. This survey is designed to gather information that will help us:

- improve and focus our advocacy for mental health consumers
- improve the way we receive and use feedback from consumers
- meet the goals of our funding agreements.

This year's survey covered topics such as the impact of the NDIS, how long people have to wait or how far they have to travel to access appropriate services, the use of restrictive practices such as seclusion and restraint by clinical services, and whether people have access to peer support.

Some of the questions in the survey were new, but there are some we always ask. One that is particularly important is what the top five issues for mental health consumers are. The responses, as always, reflect the diversity of lived experience, but there were some clear themes that emerged. The top issues identified related to:

- personal recovery;
- physical health including diet and fitness;
- interpersonal relationships and social isolation;
- access to timely and affordable services;
- Employment; and
- Stigma.

All of the consumers who responded to the survey

agreed that it is important for mental health consumers to be involved in the design and development of mental health services in the ACT. More than half of the responses indicated difficulty accessing psychologists or psychiatrists due to either cost or waiting times. Some respondents reported their experience of services as being patronizing and invalidating, naming inpatient care as being particularly dehumanising. Some had physical health concerns addressed when they accessed services, and some had follow up care plans put in place, but these were not consistently done and consumers didn't always feel as involved in the development of their care plans as they wanted to be.

While the majority of consumers identified as having a disability, fewer than half had an NDIS package. Many of those who did not have a package thought they wouldn't be eligible, or that the process wasn't worthwhile for other reasons, or had applied and been found not to be eligible. Only a third of respondents were confident they understood how to apply for and manage an NDIS package, and many of those who were confident either had packages, or worked in the sector.

Consumers who had experienced peer support were very positive about the role of that support in their recovery.

The Network would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey. The responses give us important information about where our advocacy efforts should be focused, and will be used to help us set our strategic priorities for the next few years.

2018 Annual General Meeting

On Tuesday 20 November, the Network held our Annual General Meeting for 2018 and had a fantastic turnout of members, external stakeholders and great speakers.

Matthew Martin, ACT representative on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, and Jo Sommer, Rehabilitation Coordinator for the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Recovery College, both gave presentations.

As always at the AGM, the election of Board members was held. Following the election, two casual vacancies for Board members were available. One of these has been filled. The outcome of the elections and the new Board of the Network for 2018/19 are in the box to the right.

The Network thanks outgoing Board members Jacqui Price, Brett Scholz, Nasreen Hafesjee, Graham Jackson and Michael Hausch for their dedication and hard work over the previous year.

Chair: Terri Warner (continuing)
Deputy Chair: Chris Corcoran (re-elected)
Secretary: Dianna Smith (continuing)
Treasurer: Pratap Chandra

Ordinary Members:

- Jenny Hodgson;
- Kerry Fry;
- Uttam Kor Chandra;
- Tony Fitzgerald;
- Bianca Rossetti;
- Paul Thompson

A very warm welcome (and welcome back).
We look forward to working with you over the coming year.



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

APPLICATION FOR PRIMARY MEMBERSHIP

NB: Primary membership is **free** for mental health consumers.

CONTACT DETAILS *Your name and at least one contact address/email is required	
Title:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Other
First Name	
Surname:	
Address:	
Postal Address: (if different)	
Email:	
Home Phone:	
Work Phone:	
Mobile Phone:	
Other contact:	
Do you have lived experience of mental illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please complete the rest of the form) <input type="checkbox"/> NO (do <u>not</u> complete the rest of this form. Ask for an Application for Associate Membership instead)
COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES:	
What is the BEST way for us to contact you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Home Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Post <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Phone

Do you want to receive Newsletters and other information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes by email <input type="checkbox"/> Yes by post
How should we send information about AGMs and other major events?	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Address <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Address <input type="checkbox"/> Email
DEMOGRAPHICS	
Year of birth:	
Aboriginal:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Torres Strait Islander:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Language other than English:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No, English only
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Intersex <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
INTEREST and INVOLVEMENT IN NETWORK ACTIVITIES	
Self-Advocacy and Consumer Representation Training (SCR)	<input type="checkbox"/> I have completed Self-Advocacy Course <input type="checkbox"/> I have completed Consumer Representation Course <input type="checkbox"/> I want to attend ART <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to attend <input type="checkbox"/> I have completed a similar course at (organisation)
Consumer Rep Program	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in becoming a Consumer Rep <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to be a Consumer Rep
Policy and Projects Program	<input type="checkbox"/> I want to be involved in discussions and projects: In these areas: <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to be involved
Network Events:	<input type="checkbox"/> I want to be involved in planning events <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to be involved

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this information



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

Training Registration Form

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

(Suburb) _____ (Postcode) _____

Phone: (h) _____ (m) _____

Email: _____

1. Which training are you registering to attend? *(Training Name and Date)*

2. Do you have any additional needs? *(e.g. wheelchair accessibility, dietary requirements)*

3. Please explain why you want to attend the above training.

4. How did you hear about this course?

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your registration. We will confirm your place as soon as possible.

About the Network

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Network is an organisation that is run by consumers for consumers. Our aim is to bring about a higher standard of health care in the mental health sector, through representation, lobbying and active involvement in new developments in the mental health sector.

Our organisation is extremely committed to the rights of mental health consumers. We promote a respectful and accepting system that involves Consumers, Carers and Professionals listening and respecting one another in an active healthy relationship. We also promote the development of support structures for all these groups.

All people who identify as being a mental health consumer are welcome to join the Network. An application form can be found on the preceding pages or by filling out and submitting via our website.

Drop-In

The Network is very pleased to offer a venue for Consumers to Drop-In for a chat and a cuppa, and/or to use the computers or phones for their self-advocacy needs most week days. Due to the nature of the Networks business, there are times when the Drop-In service unfortunately will be closed, and we try to keep members informed of any closures.

A notice of expected opening times for the current and following week is posted at the front door to the office.

**Drop-In hours
are 11am – 1pm,
Thursdays.**



Level 2, Room 11
The Griffin Centre
20 Genge St, Civic



(02) 6230 5796



www.actmhc.org.au



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