



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

NETWORK NEWS

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2022 Consumer Survey

A reminder that the 2022 Consumer Survey is closing on 30 June 2022.

Copies of survey have been distributed to members by mail and email and we've received a great response so far, but we still need to hear from you.

If you need a hard copy of the survey please contact us on 02 6230 5796 to arrange a time to pick one up or request that one be posted out to you.

Alternatively, you can complete this survey online, by either copying and pasting the SurveyMonkey link (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FQDX7BK>) into a web browser or scan the QR code using the camera on your smartphone.



A reminder that EVERY consumer in the ACT who fills in the survey will get a \$20 Woolworths or Coles gift card.

Completed surveys are due by 11.59pm 30 June 2022.

From the CEO's desk



Dear Readers

Welcome to the winter edition of the Network News for 2022... We have a lot of exciting things on the

boil which we look forward to working with consumers to achieve!

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome Eva Damarjati to the staffing team as Consumer Representative Program Officer. Eva has already shown her immense administrative and advocacy skills that are essential for this role, and she has great plans for how to move the program forward for consumers. Eva has been busy scheduling one on one meetings with each of our Consumer Reps, and she will then reach out to other consumers to support their engagement in ways that suit them.

As promised in the Autumn edition, we created and circulated the 2022 Mental Health Consumer Survey in June. The survey will remain open until 30 June, and every consumer who lives or accesses services in the ACT will receive a \$20 gift voucher for their participation. We have received over 100 completed surveys from consumers already, and look forward to receiving many more. Don't miss out on your opportunity to help us advocate for better services and programs for anyone who may need them!

The 2022-27 Strategic Plan was endorsed at the April meeting of the Board. Thank you to everyone who engaged in this process – the responses consumers provide us in the survey will help us to formulate our workplan and guide our work over the coming years.

We are excited to announce an upcoming consumer project where we will work with consumers and Mental Illness Education ACT to develop digital stories from consumers for whom the Network has had a positive effect on their lives and recovery. We look forward to launching this exciting project.

As previously mentioned, our new website build is currently underway. We are pleased to have been able to engage Andrew Hore, professional cartoonist of FunnyWorksOz to develop some fun illustrations to present what we do, how we do it, and draw people's attention when visiting our website and viewing our other resources. We have successfully worked with Andrew in the past on our NDIS for Peer Workers training course, so engaging him for this project was a no-brainer!

We are and will be updating and upgrading many things over the coming year or so, so keep an eye out for opportunities to participate along the way.

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

Network Update

Here is a run down of what the Network has been doing since our last newsletter

Introduction to Eva Damarjati

Following the recruitment process, I am pleased to introduce myself to you as the new Consumer Representative Program Officer. I commenced in this role on 19 April 2022 and I feel grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Consumer Representative Program and the Network, and to learn more about the ACT mental health sector.

Prior to joining the Network my background included working as an IT Officer in the Australian government. I am also currently studying a Master of Counselling and I hope to use these skills to support Reps in the Consumer Representative Program Officer role. I am keen to learn more about this role and working with the Network team, especially the Consumer Representatives. I look forward to meeting more members over the coming year.



ACT Housing Relocation Program Consultation

The Network hosted a forum on 20 April 2022 for consumers who are currently being affected by the ACT Housing Relocation Program. The purpose of this forum was to gather consumers' experiences of how this program is affecting their mental health, how information is being communicated and any other issues that this program has caused for tenants. The consumers who attended did not identify any direct effects to them.

If you were not able to attend this forum, or are now experiencing issues with the relocation program, we still welcome your input. This can be emailed to policy@actmhc.org.au or call 02 6230 5796 to talk with Deigh or Jen.

The Network will continue to work with ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) regarding this work due to its likely effects on individuals with mental illness.

Network learns 'DoNOHarm' training

We organised for Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) to facilitate a day's training in 'DoNOHarm' storytelling, which was attended by both our staff and volunteers workers mid April.

DoNOHarm involves learning how to safely tell your story in a way that minimises the effect of a listener's own trauma being re-triggered, while also developing strategies for how to minimise the effect of hearing such stories.

Feedback about the training was very positive and it was a great opportunity for staff and active members to learn about how storytelling can effect the narrator and the audience—which is something that has had, and can have, a huge impact in our roles.

Consumer Representative Program Update

A Consumer Representative Program (CRP) Forum was held on 7 June 2022 (11am – 12pm) in person at the Network and via Zoom. Michelle Jones (A/g Operational Director – Territory Wide Mental Health Services) and Katie McKenzie (A/g Executive Director, MHJHADS) were invited as guest speakers, however their attendance had to be postponed due to low attendance. Another suitable date will be scheduled, with the possibility of them attending Drop-In instead.

A reminder that Consumer Representatives are now reimbursed for attending the CRP Forum as it forms part of their role expectations.

Discussion at the Forum centred around ongoing issues of Consumer Representatives being able to identify their reimbursements from committees, the absence of consumer voice and the disbanding of committees that we have previously reported on.

For readers hearing about this committee disbandment for the first time, at the start of 2022, Canberra Health Services began making significant changes to the number of mental health related committees they convene, with some either merging or being disbanded. To date it is still unclear which committees are affected by these changes, which prevents us from appointing Consumer Representatives to committees. Existing appointments that have a two-year term have been extended, where appropriate, to maintain consumer participation and feedback.

We have raised the concerns of our Consumer Representatives about reimbursements and the current status of committees at the Executive level of MHJHADS and with the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson MLA and will continue to pursue these matters until resolved.

New Catch Ups for Reps

The first Consumer Representative Catch Up was held on 3 May 2022. These catch ups are an informal opportunity for Consumer Representatives to discuss any issues and concerns they have regarding their committees or role, between CRP Forums.

The catch ups occur on the first Tuesday of every odd month, between CRP forums, and are held from 11am to 12 noon.

Policy Reference Group to Recommence

It has been some time since the Policy Reference Group (PRG) within the Networks' Policy Program last met due to COVID-19 and other matters.

With the large amount of formal documents and programs the Network has been consulted on recently, there is a great need to re-establish our PRG.

For members and readers who have an interest in policy matters, the PRG is a working group of consumers and Network staff which identifies and prioritises the policy direction that the Network should participate in.

A formal invitation has been sent out to members. If you are interested, please contact Jen on 0447 127 941 or email to policy@actmhc.org.au

New ACT Consumer Rep for the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum

The Network nominated Paul Thompson (pictured) to be the Consumer Representative for the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) to the ACT Health Directorate.

We are pleased to report that Paul's nomination was accepted to be the ACT Consumer Representative on the NMHCCF as he has an active and long-term involvement with the Network and consumers, making him a highly suitable candidate.

Congratulations to Paul on this appointment. We look forward to hearing reports from NMHCCF in the future.



Upcoming Community Education courses on hold

Following the recent completion of Self-Advocacy and Consumer Representation training from April to June, our delivery of training workshops will be taking a break for the second half of 2022.

A special thank you to our Co-facilitators Bianca and Maree who helped in delivering these workshops. This was also Maree's first time delivering training since completing the Peer Co-facilitator training and she did a really great job!

This break is to allow the Network to begin focusing on developing an online learning platform for consumers to more readily access our training in more flexible ways to suit their needs.



In addition, in the second half of the year we will be developing a series of videos exploring stories of how involvement with the Network has changed people's life and supported their recovery.

My Rights, My Decisions Workshops

My Rights, My Decisions workshops continue to be delivered for clinicians and support workers to ensure consumers are supported in ways that suit their needs and preferences when they become unwell.

One recent workshop was held for Woden Community Service and, from this, a series of My Rights, My Decisions workshops will be held through their Step Up Step Down Program. As there is frequent turn over in SUSD participants transitioning from accommodation to outreach services, these workshops will ensure many consumers will be informed of this program. The Step Up Step Down workshops will commence in late June.

Sessions for consumers are currently being delivered at ACT libraries, both online and in person. The community rooms available at libraries are proving to be excellent spaces as they are not clinical spaces and they expand accessibility to people with limited transport options.

Making the training workshops more accessible, plus regularly engaging with consumers through SUSD as well as clinicians and other workers, will result in more people having their Nominated Person, Advance Agreements and Advance Consent Directions in place to enable individually appropriate treatment and supports when in need of future care.

Drop-In

Drop-In is available for in-person or online attendance.

In-person Drop-In is held on Thursdays from 10am to 1pm, with online Drop-In available from 11am to 12pm via Zoom. At times, due to illness, unavoidable working arrangements etc., Drop-In may need to close a little early some weeks. If this happens, we try to give members as much notice as possible.

To join the Online Drop-In click on or type in the following link and enter the Meeting ID and/or passcode as needed:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85389263153?pwd=MVNkaWZIR21wWDMrSjY1MVhkZ2JjQT09>

Meeting ID: 853 8926 3153

Passcode: 991826



Recent activities held since our last newsletter included guest presentations on the Landcare ACT Wellbeing Through Nature Program and Wellways Adult Step Up Step Down Program.

In early June a consultation was held with consumers about the types of Drop-In activities that would interest them. From this we identified a few ideas for workshops that would offer consumers some practical learning opportunities such as navigating an application through ACAT, and learning how to use the Services Australia's online system to manage your Centrelink.

We are seeking some ideas from members about what type of activities would be of interest in attending Drop-In. If you have any ideas, please forward them to Paul by email to dropin@actmhcn.org.au or call us on 02 6230 5796.

TheMHS Autumn Forum 2022 Report

We attended TheMHS Autumn Forum together on 28 April. The theme for this forum was 'Recovery, Rehabilitation and Psychosocial Disability in a Persistently Complex System'. Speakers included researchers like Lisa Brophy and Debbie Hamilton, both known for their work on psychosocial disability and the NDIS, government experts like Gerry Naughtin (Strategic Advisor on Psychosocial Disability and Mental Health for the NDIA) and Bruce Bonyhady (the first Chair of the NDIA), Mary O'Hagan who is now with the Victorian Department of Health (but you might know her better as the founder of PeerZone and author of 'Madness Made Me'), as well as speakers from both state based and national mental health service providers.

One of the key messages on the day was that the NDIA is working at gaining a better understanding of psychosocial disability. However, this doesn't help people who aren't eligible for the NDIS who are falling through the gaps in a system that is still too clinically focused to really support recovery, doesn't provide enough peer support, and isn't geared towards the needs of the individual.

Being there in person had the added benefit of allowing us to meet new people and catch up with colleagues we haven't seen since 2019. The hybrid format meant that the event was accessible for people who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend, and we hope that TheMHS will continue to run events in this way.

A particular highlight was that there was considerably more lived experience input than in previous years. Almost 50% of the presenters were known peer leaders and consumer or carer advocates. This is another trend we hope will continue at TheMHS events in the future.

Terri Warner and Rose Beard

Mental Health Sector Developments

ACT Charter of Rights Mental Health Review

The ACT Charter of Rights for people experiencing mental illness or mental disorder has been going under a review process. The new Charter is going through its final design stage and is expected to be available very soon.

Once it has been finalised and printed, we'll notify members and have it available via our website.

Mental Health Short Stay Unit Development

Development of the new Mental Health Short Stay Unit on the grounds of the Canberra Hospital is ongoing. The following infrastructure developments have been agreed upon to be put forth for approval.

1. The MHSSU will be located adjoining the Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU) but will have its own front door and reception. Consumers and their supporters will not have to walk through AMHU to get to the MHSSU. The proposed location will allow all bedrooms to look over gardens.
2. Will use AMHU carpark with no additional car parking proposed.

Once these proposals are finalised and endorsed, the design process may be able to commence.

Here are a some updates on developments within the mental sector that the Network is involved in.

Guides to Health Care Complaints Launch

A launch of the Guide to Health Care Complaints and Guide to Mental Health Complaints was held on Monday 20 June 2022 which coincided with a webinar on health complaints in the ACT.

These guides were developed by the Canberra Health Literacy Network (CHLN)—an initiative of the Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) with support from the ACT Health Directorate and in consultation with consumers, carers and their representative organisations, including the Network.

The Guides aim to help consumers give feedback or make a complaint about a health or mental health service they have accessed.

The webinar related to this launch explained how complaints processes work in the ACT and included speakers from ACT Human Rights Commission, Australia Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and HCCA.

Copies of the guides are available from www.hcca.org.au/takeaction/

Mental Health Outcomes Framework

Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT (MHCC ACT) circulated the Mental Health Outcomes survey in May 2022.

This survey was developed in collaboration with ACT Health and aimed to identify relevant and appropriate outcome measurement tools, and any barriers or challenges that need to be addressed before such tools are implemented across the sector.

The Network participated in a review of the survey on 23 June 2022.

A formal presentation on the survey outcomes will be presented at the upcoming MHCC ACT mid year forum on 21 July 2022 (see page 8 for details).

New Mental Health Legal Service

The Mental Health Justice Clinic was established to provide targeted legal assistance and education to people with lived experience of mental ill-health. The key focus areas of the Clinic are:

- Discrimination based on mental health
- Mental health related employment matters
- Health and disability services complaints
- Vulnerable person complaints to the ACT Human Rights Commission for people with lived experience of mental ill-health (this may include complaints against service providers, carers, guardians, and power of attorney arrangements)
- Mental health related Centrelink matters, including accessing the Disability Support Pension Mental health related public housing matters



Please note that services are free of charge.

People are able to self refer to the service by email to info@canberracommunitylaw.org.au or call (02) 6218 7900.



The Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC ACT) invites all community-managed mental health services to this workshop on how outcome measurements should be applied in the upcoming ACT Government commissioning funding process.

At this workshop, attendees will explore some of the key findings from their survey of community-managed mental health sector organisations about measuring service outcomes for consumers and/or carers in ACT non-government mental health organisations.

Attendees can attend in-person or virtually, with lunch and refreshments will be provided for those attending in person.

Further information and to register for virtual attendance by clicking on the forum image on this page or copy and paste the below URL into a web browser

https://events.humanitix.com/mhcc-act-mid-year-forum?mc_cid=b00c8f3ca3&mc_eid=e700fe7b80

Want to help shape the future 10-year ACT Disability Strategy?

Join us for a focused conversation on **Justice and Disability**. The conversation will look at the justice system and experience for people with disability.

The conversation will contribute to both the ACT Disability Strategy as well as the next phase of the Disability Justice Strategy.

The Office for Disability wants to hear from people with disability, families, carers and interested community members on how to create a more inclusive future for all Canberrans.

When: Thursday 28 July from 10.00am to 12.30pm

Where: Health Care Consumers' Association of the ACT
100 Maitland Street Hackett ACT

RSVP: <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-disability-strategy/focused-conversation-justice>

The consultation for the ACT Disability Strategy has been co-designed with the ACT Disability Reference Group and all conversations will be led by people with disability.

The consultation is open until the end of July 2022. Find out more at: yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-disability-strategy

MHFA National Consumers



Art Competition 2022

Theme: Resilience & Mental Health

Create your creative artwork using submit it online in any form be it either paintings, drawings, mosaics, photos, computerised images or other art mediums.

Winning artwork will be selected by a panel of judges for virtual showcase at the Mental Health Month Launch on the 1st of October 2022. Open to all members of the community.

Winning Prizes & Awards

The winning artwork will be showcased digitally at the respective states and territories launch event on 1 October 2022.

The winning artist in each state will be awarded with prize money and trophy during the National Mental Health Month 2022.

Prize: \$500

Applications close on 31st July 2022, 11:59pm

Submission

This year, the competition is being conducted **online and nationwide**. You can submit your artwork through the web form link.

Form link: <https://tinyurl.com/NCACM>



www.mhfa.org.au

Do you need mental health info or support?



The [Canberra Head to Health Centre](#) is a new, free adult mental health centre to help Canberrans find the mental health support they need.

The Head to Health Pop Up clinic is for anyone over 12 years of age experiencing feelings of anxiety or depression or for their family or carers. For an initial assessment, please make contact using the details below.

No appointment or referral required. Just:

call **1800 595 212** or

drop in at ALIA House, First Floor, **9 Napier Close, Deakin** (Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm).

STRIDE For better mental health

Feeling distressed?
Need a Safe Haven?



Safe Haven

We provide a safe space to talk for adults and young people 16+ in emotional distress.

Talk to our caring support team today.

We're here to help. Walk in, no referral needed.

Ground Floor
56 Lathlain St
Belconnen 2617

Tue to Sat
4:30pm - 9pm

+61 421 154 147
Stride.com.au



This service has been made possible by funding from ACT Health.

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 following 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, participate in activities, and/or to use the computers or phones for their self-advocacy needs. This service has resumed face-to-face from 10am to 1pm Thursdays and include online participation via Zoom between 11am to 12pm. (see page 6 for details)

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.



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



0449 127 941



www.actmhcn.org.au



www.facebook.com/actmhcn/



APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

NB: Individual membership is **free**.

MEMBERSHIP TYPES AND CRITERIA

Primary Membership

- Has lived experience of mental illness
- Lives and/or accesses services for mental health in the ACT

Associate

- May have lived experience of mental illness but does not live and/or accesses services for mental health in the ACT
- Is a carer or support person of someone with mental illness
- Supports the aims of the Network

(Associate memberships are to be renewed annually)

I AM APPLYING FOR:

Primary Membership

Associate Membership

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:					
Mobile Phone:					
Other contact:					

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
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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) Primary Members only	<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 SCR <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to attend <input type="checkbox"/> I have completed a similar course at (organisation)
Consumer Rep Program Primary Members only	<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

