



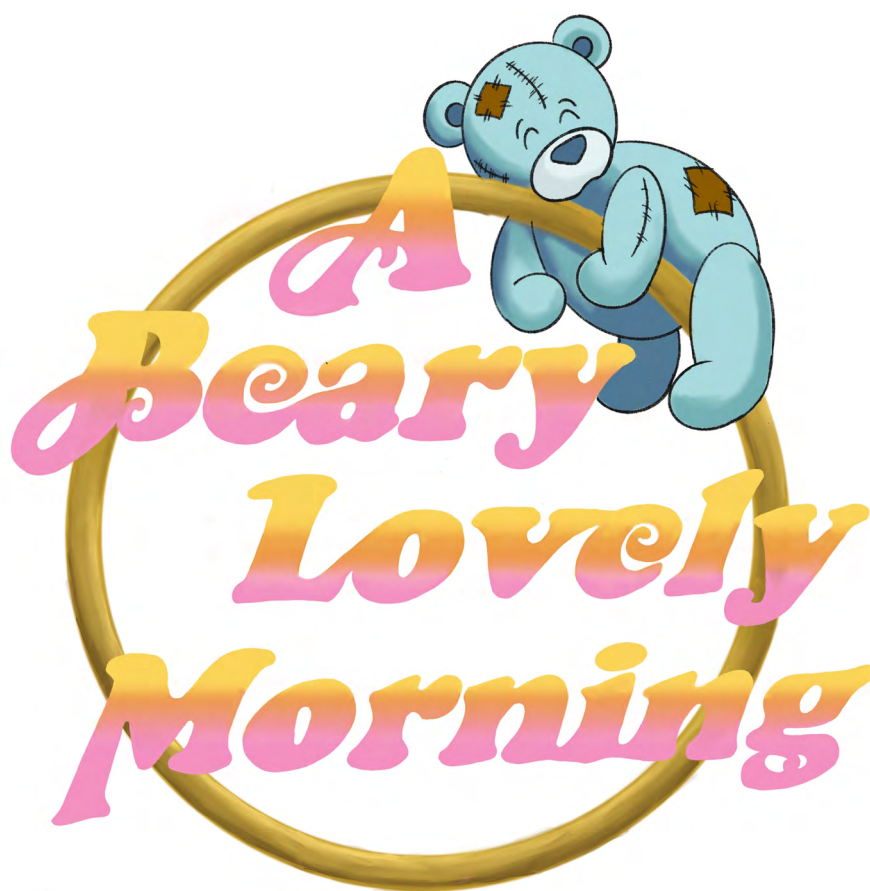
ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

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Network News

Winter/Spring 2023



**10am Monday 16 October and Thursday 26
October 2023**

Westfield Belconnen

The Network is pleased to announce that we will be holding not one, but **TWO** Beary Lovely Mornings for Mental Health Month in 2023!

This event fills up fast, so we encourage anyone interested in attending to register as soon as possible.

Turn to page 12 for more details and how to register.

Offering you a voice

From the CEO

Welcome to the combined edition of the Network News for 2023!

This year has continued to be extremely busy, and we've managed to keep up fairly well despite our teeny capacity. We have had two quite significant changes in the team in recent weeks. Firstly, Ben Martin is unfortunately no longer working with us. We wish him the very best in his future endeavours. Secondly, a change that will affect our volunteers, active members and staff over many years is the recent passing of Charli, the unofficial office dog. As Charli's mum for the past 17 years, her passing is particularly sad for me, but I recognise the love and affection she shared with so many both in and out of the office.

Following Ben's departure, Petra will be working on the adjustment of My Rights, My Decisions training resources to bring them in line with recent sector developments, such as the introduction of the Digital Health Record which replaced the MAJIC-er system. Jo will be providing some administrative support for the new Education Reference Group and some other tasks in the community education program, such as the development of the new e-learning project. Once the MRMD resources are up to date early next year,



we look forward to recommencing training for consumers and workers alike.

We were recently awarded a one-off grant for a small research project under the ActewAGL Community Grants Program. Dia will put her PhD and experience to good work as the lead researcher for this project, and will work closely with consumers, an ACACIA researcher, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the project.

We have been working on several national matters, such as the recent announcement of a national consumer peak body, as a member of the Alliance of state and territory consumer peaks. I need to keep this report short, but I look forward to updating you on this work further as things progress. Check out our upcoming Annual Report for a fuller update on this work in the interim.

Check out the rest of the newsletter for further details of what we have worked on and what we have coming up soon. I hope to see you at one or more of our upcoming events. 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.

Changes to event registrations and communications

Apart from the updated look of our newsletter, we have some news about other changes that have been, or are soon to be made, to how the Network interacts and communicates with members.

Online event registrations now available

Through our new website, members and other community members can register to attend our events without having to email or call us. A calendar of upcoming events is available at <https://actmhcn.org.au/events/>

When advertising our events, we will include links to the event page where you can get more information and register to attend. This process is automated so you will get a confirmation email and we will see that you have registered. If you happen to respond back by email to register, that's not a problem, we can still register you and give a gentle reminder that online self-registration is available for future use.

For some events, will we ask for participants to register by email or phone, so keep an eye on the registration details.

New mailing lists coming

In the near future, our email communications will become more targeted to the interests of members, based on the new information we capture from our updated membership forms. This will mean that you will stop receiving some emails, such as the e-bulletin, if you haven't told us that you want to receive this. See page 3 for details on how you can update your membership and communication details.

Network Updates

Update your membership details and communication preferences

We realise that we have been sending out a LOT of emails recently, with so many things going on, and we apologise for flooding your inbox.

So that we can keep you informed about upcoming events and information relevant to you, we have created specific mailing lists in our database that use the information on our new membership forms to tailor emails to only the things people want to receive.

This information is categorised into three main areas:

- Free training events – informing about Self-Advocacy, Consumer Representation etc. training and My Rights, My Decisions workshops;
- Discussions, forums and projects - Network policy consultations etc., along with external research participation opportunities; and
- Volunteer opportunities (with reimbursement of costs) – Consumer Representation, Co-Facilitating, Mentoring opportunities, helping with events and identified opportunities in Network specific working groups etc.

As these options only became available when we updated our membership forms, only new members who joined using the updated form have been able to make these selections.

For members like you who signed up before these changes, we need your help so that we can tailor the things you receive to suit your preferences.

To make this as easy as possible we have created a quick and easy form that you can use to update your personal details and let us know what you want to hear from us about. You can find the form online by clicking on the button below

Members who receive communications by post, a copy of the form has been included as an insert with this newsletter.

We would really appreciate it if you could please take the time to complete this form. If you have problem accessing the form, please contact us.

If we don't hear back from you, we will only send out documentation for the Annual General Meeting and Special General Meeting, which we are required by law to do for all members.

We have also been experimenting with a new email editor, which aims to make our communications more vibrant and interactive with online sources.

AGM 2023



An early notice to members that the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Annual General Meeting for 2022 will be held on

Tuesday 14 November 2023

Time and location to be confirmed

Formal notification of the AGM and papers, including nomination forms for positions on the Network Board, will be mailed out to members in late October-early November 2023.

Prior to the AGM there will be a Special General Meeting to endorse a small but important correction to the Networks Constitution. Documentation for the SGM will be sent separately to members.

If you need to update your contact details with the Network or change how you want to receive future communications, see above or contact us on 02 6230 5796 or email actmhcncn@actmhcncn.org.au

Drop-In

WHAT'S COMING UP?

Since our last newsletter, the Network has continued to provide space for the monthly Mental Health Justice Clinic, facilitated by Canberra Community Law, on the first Thursday of each month. We are really pleased to see the number of consumers who are accessing this service growing. More details about the Justice Clinic is on page 15.

Other events that have been held during Drop-In include:

A consultation session between consumers and the Mental Health Commissioning Team (MHCT) on June 29.

An information session on discrimination law facilitated by Canberra Community Law on 17 August.

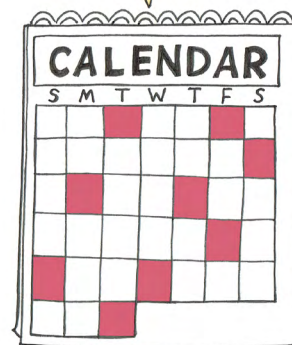
Event surveys

For our reporting needs, a short survey is sent out to the people that have participated in Drop-In activities. This survey lets us know what Drop-In can be doing better as well as letting us know about topics of interest that we can organise events around. We greatly appreciate participants of Drop-In completing and returning these surveys to us when they are sent out.



Save the Date!

End of year barbecue is back and will be held on Thursday 7 December 2023 from 11am down in Room 1, Ground Floor Griffin Centre



Occasionally special events are organised for Drop-In. These can be social, educational or creative. See the Upcoming Events page on our website (<https://actmhc.org.au/events/>) to see what is coming up and to register.

Upcoming events include:

- A Digital Health Record update session is scheduled for 28 September, 10am.
- Wellbeing Priori-Tea on 12 October, 10am

We will be holding a Wellbeing Priori-Tea for consumers to attend either in person or online. To attend online, see page 20 for the online Drop-In Zoom details.

Catering will be provided to attendees who come in-person. For consumers who attend online, you will need to provide your own morning tea.

If you want to come along, let Jo know by email to dropin@actmhc.org.au or call 02 6230 5796.

- A Beary Lovely Morning 26 October (see page 12 for details and other ways to join in).

‘Your Say’ overlooks the consumer voice

The Network has noticed an emerging trend in how consumer representation is starting to be engaged by the ACT Health Directorate, via the ACT Government ‘Your Say’ website.

This is of great concern for organisations like the Network for many reasons including, but not limited to

- the lack of formal training to be a consumer representative on a committee
- the lack of formal supports for consumer representatives once appointed to a committee
- no means for the consumer representative to ensure the voice they are sharing is the collective voice of consumers and not just their own
- a fundamental lack of knowledge about what the peak mental health organisations do.

We have raised these concerns with the Directorate, with several meetings having taken place between the Directorate staff and the peaks, including the Network to begin managing these concerns.

An outcome of these meetings has been the creation of a new committee called the ACTHD and Consumer and Carer Peaks Liaison Committee. The purpose of this committee is to ensure that our concerns are addressed and that the consumer voice is properly represented.



Consumers e-stories in production

We are in the process of developing a series of videos featuring Network members sharing stories about how the involvement with the Network has impacted their lives.

Each resource will feature one member and their personal story. The final resources will be approximately 2-4 minutes long and are intended to capture what the Network is all about, to encourage other consumers to get involved. These resources are currently going through the editing and animating process, and we are excited to see the final result and be able to share it with our members!



It is expected that a formal launch of these videos will held by the end of 2023. Keep you eyes out for notices in your email or post for details.

Staffing updates

Jen has returned to the Network after an extended period of leave. Dia who filled in for Jen has continued at the Network in a supportive role to the Policy and Participation program.

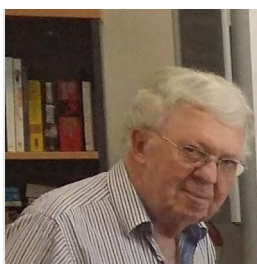
Readers will no doubt recall the number of policy consultations we have sent notices out over the previous few months, as well as convening the Policy Reference Group more frequently, the workload in this area has grown astronomically, so we are really grateful to keep Dia on in this role for as long as we can.

Dia also applied for some research grant funding from ActewAGL, so she will be even busier. See page 11 for details about the research and how you can get involved.



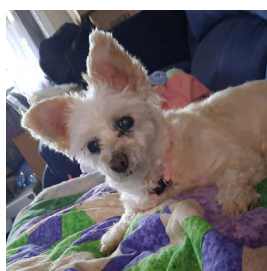
Vale Graham and Charli

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the recent passing of our dear office dog, Charli in September 2023, and long time member Graham Jackson in May 2023.



Members who knew Graham will remember him as a gently spoken, kind and intelligent man. Since 2016, Graham has been a valued Board member, Consumer Representative and policy contributor. As a Board

member, Graham provided invaluable guidance and expertise, helping shape our direction and ensuring that our mission remained focused. His contributions to policy and representation helped shape significant areas of reform and made a lasting impact. Beyond his official roles, Graham's warmth and kindness for others touched the lives of many at the Network. We extend our deepest condolences to Graham's family and loved ones during this difficult time. May they find peace in the knowledge that Graham's contributions have made a lasting difference to consumers now and into the future.



For many years, Charli graced the Network with her bright spirit, unwavering loyalty and compassionate presence. With her small stature and those endearing big ears, Charli was not just a dog but a cherished member of our advocacy family. She had a remarkable ability to uplift our spirits

and offer comfort and a wagging tail during even the most challenging moments. Her departure leaves a void in our hearts as she was not just a canine companion but an indispensable part of our team. Charli's friendly nature and caring spirit touched the lives and recovery of countless individuals within our community. Her presence was a constant reminder of the unconditional love and devotion that pets generously share with us, saving the lives of many people through difficult circumstances. Charli will forever hold a special place in our hearts, and her legacy will continue to inspire us in our commitment to mental health advocacy.

MRMD to be quicker and more accessible

The My Rights, My Decisions (MRMD) peer education workshop for consumers has recently been reviewed.

The review has determined that streamlining the workshops into two-to-three-hour sessions, rather than spaced out over two days will work better for participants. This will support more consumers to participate in workshops and begin the process of completing the form kit with support from the facilitator who can explain or clarify any details of the form kit.

In an effort to expand consumer and stakeholder knowledge of and access to MRMD we are approaching some key mental health services to promote the MRMD form kit. Services, such as Safe Haven and the Wellways Step Up, Step Down program, are initially being contacted as they have a consistent flow of consumers accessing them which will broaden knowledge of the MRMD to more consumers.

Creating a plain language version of the MRMD workbook is an upcoming priority to accommodate



individual literacy skills and learning capacity.

On the flip side to this, tailored versions of the workshop are also in development for clinical staff such as hospital staff, psychiatric registrars, general practitioners etc., who will have differing learning requirements to consumers.

ACACIA's 10 year milestone

The ACT Consumer and Carer Mental Health Research Unit (ACACIA), a mental health research body based at ANU, has turned 10 this year.

At its June committee meeting, the ACACIA Advisory Group reviewed the achievements that ACACIA has made since the initial community event back in 2013 where consumers and carers outlined what the priorities of the Unit should be.

The Network congratulates Associate Professor Dr Michelle Banfield, Head of ACACIA on directing ACACIA over the past 10 years in undertaking research which is relevant to and benefits the lives of mental health consumers and carers in the ACT.



A special celebration marking this occasion was held in early September 2023.

E-Learning on the way!

As mentioned in the Autumn 2023 newsletter, the Network is branching out on the accessibility and flexibility of our community education workshops to include online learning.

Petra has been progressing on this project studying Digital Instructional Design and convening the Education Reference Group (ERG) to help guide her in developing a pilot training module based on one of our existing educational courses.

The ERG is a new component of the Community Education Program and its purpose is to ensure consumer-led design and review continues in the development and delivery of the Network's training, including My Rights, My Decisions.

We are hopeful that a pilot trial can be held soon, to get feedback and continue to advance development into an entire course. Keep an eye out for updates if that's something you might be interested in participating in!

Another component to the e-learning platform is providing recordings of Consumer Representative



Program Masterclasses for current and future Consumer Representatives to access. The latest Masterclass on Discrimination Law and Consumer Representation, facilitated by Farzana Choudhury from Canberra Community Law, is an example of the type of workshops that can be made available via e-learning.

The Network is really excited about the adaptation of our training to this new methodology and offering it to consumers in the future.

While this is in development, our courses in Self-Advocacy and Consumer Representation will be on hold. For any reader that is interested in doing this type of training, please contact us for referrals to other organisations who provide similar training.

End of Year celebrations

An early heads up to members that we will be holding our end of year barbecue on Thursday 7 December 2023, so mark that date in your diary!

Our last official end of year event was back in 2019, so we are very glad to be able to hold this event for members to come together again and see out the year.

Also on this day, a special celebration for all of our volunteers (Consumer Representatives, Board Members, Co-facilitators and PRG/ERG members) will also be held.

All catering will be provided and formal notices will be sent out closer to the date.



New submissions available

Since reconvening the Policy Reference Group (PRG), several Canberra Health Services (CHS) documents have been reviewed, with submissions and feedback provided or in development. Full versions of our submissions are available from our website (<https://actmhc.n.org.au/submissions/>).



CHS Open Disclosure Procedure

Due to capacity issues, a submission was not written for this Procedure. However, a letter based on discussions was submitted, along with the recommendation from the PRG that the NSW Open Disclosure Procedure be used as a guide as it was a much clearer document.

CHS Draft Model of Service Emergency Department

This Draft Model is for the new Emergency Department at the Canberra Hospital. Several issues were raised with the document, including the need for trauma informed language to be used throughout the hospital as well as having sensory rooms for adults as well as children and older persons.

CHS Draft Operating Procedure - Emergency Detention in an Approved Mental Health Facility and a Person's Rights under the Mental Health Act 2015 (Adults and children)

Several problematic issues were raised with this procedure, requiring the policy team to meet with Sonny Ward (Director of Nursing) and Denise Riordan (Clinical Director - MHJHADS) to clarify several points, particularly around Emergency Detention 3 day and Emergency Detention 11 day. The submission is currently being drafted taking into consideration the conversation and the input from the PRG.

Consumer Representation update



The Consumer Representative Program is pleased to announce that some of the new Consumer Reps from our last round of training have begun on their very first committees!

ACT Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Executive Committee

Luke Lake has recently been appointed to this Committee. The role of the Executive Committee is to provide executive oversight for regional mental health and suicide prevention activities that are governed by the ACT Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, the ACT-Commonwealth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Bilateral Agreement, the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, and other national mental health and suicide prevention priorities.

Digital Health Record (DHR) Consumer Experience Steering Committee

Katie Price has been appointed to this committee, taking over from Maree Pavloudis whose two-year term recently ended. The purpose of this committee is to participate in and oversee the decision making in relation to the Digital Health Record and related clinical ICT applications.

In addition to our new Consumer Reps, we also have some long time Representatives becoming active again.

Dhulwa Inquiry Policy and Security Workstream

Matthew Martin was appointed to this committee which is responsible for the design, development and implementation of recommendations allocated to them in the Implementation Plan.

ACT Universal Aftercare Steering Group

Julie McMahon has recently been appointed to this Steering Group. The Group will be instrumental in delivering the ACT Universal Aftercare project. It will be responsible for decision making and driving actions and activities necessary for the successful delivery of part 1 and 2 of the Universal Aftercare schedule outlined in the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Bilateral Schedule with the Australian Capital Territory (pages 7 and 8).

- i. Part 1: Implement enhancement and expansion of existing aftercare supports for those who have been discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt (Aftercare Services program), including increased clinical and multidisciplinary capacity; and
- ii. Part 2: Implement a pilot to expand referral and entry pathways to aftercare support from other health settings to capture those who have experienced a suicidal crisis without being admitted to hospital (Aftercare Pilot program), including improving system integration across existing local suicide prevention services and processes.

Invitation to co-design our peer research

Do you have lived experience of mental illness?

Have you had difficulty accessing mental health services and/or support groups in the ACT?

The Network, with funding support from the ActewAGL Community Grants program, is conducting a consumer led and co-designed study into barriers to accessing mental health services in the ACT and region.

We need your voice as a consumer to identify the mental health services and/or supports that you have accessed, tried to access or want to access in the ACT.

The project will consist of three rounds of focus groups, each round consisting of five groups. We strongly encourage participants to attend a focus group in each of the three rounds.

Focus Groups will be held in hybrid style (online and in person). Details will be provided on registration.

In the **first round** your voice will determine what this research project examines. We want to know what barriers **YOU** want the Network to investigate through this project.

Who: Up to 40 mental health consumers who have tried to access mental health services and/or supports in the ACT during the last 12 months.

You can participate on one of these dates:

- Monday 9 October (5 - 7pm)
- Wednesday 11 October (10am - 12pm)
- Friday 13 October (1 - 3pm)
- Tuesday 17 October (5 - 7pm)
- Thursday 19 October (10am - 12pm)

To register, send an email with your name and which Focus Group(s) you are available to participate in and any dietary requirements to research@actmhc.org.au

Contact: Please contact Dia or Jen (research@actmhc.org.au; 6230 5796) for further information or to register for a Focus Group.

Reimbursement: \$75 will be provided to each participant in each Focus Group

This project is supported by



Australian
National
University

A Beary Lovely Morning

Having mental illness can be an isolating and lonely experience. Join us for a 'Beary' Lovely Morning where you will build your own personal teddy bear buddy to help you in your recovery journey, whilst making new friends or reconnecting with old ones.

Due to the immense interest in this event, for 2023 we are pleased to announce that there will be **TWO** (2) Bear Lovely Mornings on Monday 16 October and Thursday 26 October 2023 both starting at 10am.

This is a free event and covers your bear and accessories up to \$50 as well as lunch.

Up to 12 people can participate any one day.

Carers and support persons are welcome to attend and will be included in the total number of participants due to workshop capacity.

Additionally, if you have any concerns or would like some more details, please contact us on the details below.

Please bear in mind the number of participants is limited, so we urge you to book in quick!

RSVP: Essential and due by Wednesday 11 October!

For online readers click the button of your preferred day to register online.

For hard copy readers, to register with your preferred day please call 02 6230 5796 or email to actmchn@actmchn.org.au

Want to participate but your preferred day is booked out or you happen to become unwell on the day?

No need to be a sad panda, we understand that circumstances can change quickly.

Get in contact with us to let us know that things have changed and you can no longer make it. This lets us fill your spot and we can also have a chat about other ways you can join in and still be part of the fun.





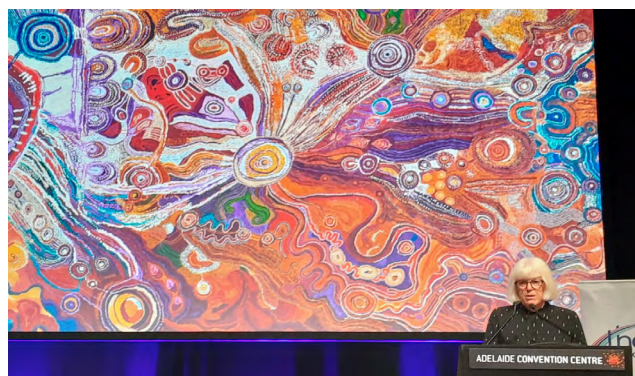
The 33rd Annual The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference was held in Adelaide from 16 to 18 August 2023. The theme for this years TheMHS conference was Making Human Rights Real: Bringing humanity and human rights in mental health. The Network was able to send four people to TheMHS online (Jenny Adams, Chris Corcoran, Thi Nha Tran and Eva Damarjati) and thanks to funding from the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division, ACT Health Directorate, we were able to send three people to Adelaide to attend in person (Jane Grace, Paul Thompson and Jen Nixon). A summary of the reports received is below.

Key Note Speakers

Professor Dainius Puras, a psychiatrist who challenges the traditional biomedical model of diagnosis and medication alone spoke on bringing humanity and human rights in mental health. He promotes humane mental health practices and the prevention of violence by involuntary treatments such as restraint and lobotomies. Dainius spoke about his work as a psychiatrist and the challenges and potential conflicts of balancing the rights of people with the need for effective treatment.



Mary O'Hagan, a psychiatric survivor who initiated a consumer movement in NZ was able to prove her psychiatrist wrong by going on to have a successful career in health services while being a social justice advocate. Mary wrote an award winning memoir called Madness Made Me. She is currently Executive Director Lived Experience in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Division at the Department of Health Victoria.



Professor Tom Calma's talk was titled The Voice: Greater Social And Emotional Well Being For Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander People And For The Nation. This was a rousing call to action on the arguments in support of a Yes vote for The Voice to Parliament. He carefully went through the red herrings and misinformation surrounding the campaign. He noted that only two Canberra representatives would be appointed to the committee, so the Canberra-centric remarks in the media are inaccurate.

Continued over page.

TheMHS 2023 Conference (continued)

Take away from other sessions

Ethics, Dilemmas and Decision-making: lived experience researchers at Latrobe University documented the highly damaging role of police in engaging with consumers experiencing mental health distress. The involvement of the police and the legal system were highly traumatising to consumers. The research identified multiple arrests, tasering and handcuffing leading to the eventual charging for “resist arrest” and criminalisation of the distressed consumer involved. However, this research identified that the majority of consumers were distressed as the result of a past trauma anniversary on that date. The research raises a clear need for a different response.

Lived Experience and Trauma: most of the presenters brought a clinical perspective, which was interesting. More challenging was a presentation by a person with lived experience, who discussed the numbing effects of drugs that she compared to a chemical lobotomy. Thankfully, the effects were reversed once her medication regime changed. This resonated with me as I have also experienced the “void” of feeling no emotions as a result of medication. Is no longer

experiences psychotic episodes as a result of a medication regime worth the loss of all vitality and the loss of all emotions?

Cultural and other diversity was discussed as not having enough support in mental health services, although there are some good initiatives. It was discussed that often there may be other explanatory views of mental health issues provided by diverse cultures – a perspective that particularly interested me after 50 years of the dominant western view.

Supported Decision Making rather than Substituted Decision Making, noting the new Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing Act (2022) includes supported decision making throughout.

There were several presentations on peer work and the numbers interstate swamp those we have in Canberra. For example, Monash Medical has 54 peer workers.

Older persons mental health and the need for aged mental health consumers to recover their dignity and rights to choice in nursing homes.

Welcome increase in services

Mental health support services in the ACT are about to receive a small but important increase, with the announcements that both Head to Health and Safe Haven (previously called Safe Haven Café) will be opening second locations in 2025.

Details on both of these expansions are currently light, but it is expected that the second Head to Health centre will open in the Tuggeranong/Erindale area. Funding was allocated in the recent ACT budget for the second Safe Haven to be located where the current Emergency Department is at the Canberra Hospital. This location is also being scoped out for refurbishment into a Mental Health Short Stay Unit.

The Network is involved in both expansions and we look forward to providing you further information in future newsletters and bulletins.



Canberra
HEAD 2 HEALTH

What's on your mind today?
Get it out in the open.



Mental Health Justice Clinic

A solicitor from the Mental Health Justice Clinic provides a FREE Drop-In service at the Network on the first Thursday of every month between 10am and 12pm.

Consumers can access the Clinic either in person or online. See page 20 for the Drop-In Zoom details.

The solicitor will be able to provide one-off legal advice and assist with any referrals. For more complex matters, the solicitor will book you in for a lengthier consultation with the Clinic. No appointment is necessary.

If you are unable to make it during Drop-In you can still self access the service by calling (02) 6218 7900 or email to info@canberracommunitylaw.org.au

CANBERRA COMMUNITY LAW

Legal help for people with lived experience of mental ill-health



Call the Mental Health Justice Clinic on (02) 6218 7900

This service is not just for members of the Network, but is open to all people with mental illness in the ACT. Please spread the word about this valuable free service!

What can the Clinic help me with?

The Clinic offers free, independent and confidential legal services in the following areas:

- **Social housing tenancy** (both public and community housing tenants)
 - » Such as advice on transfer applications, repairs, and receiving notices to remedy and notices to vacate
- **Centrelink**
 - » Such as advice on debts and Disability Support Pension eligibility and appeals
- **Discrimination**
 - » Such as advice on making a complaint to the ACT Human Rights Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission
- **Employment**
 - » Such as advice on termination of employment and being bullied at work
- **Health and disability services complaints**
- **Vulnerable person complaints**



Mental Health Month occurs each year in October and encompasses World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

It is an opportunity to raise community awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions, and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health Month is celebrated in the ACT with a range of community events and activities each October. There are opportunities for everyone in our community to get involved, take steps to maintain and boost their own mental wellbeing, build networks, and support others.

The main source of information for Mental Health Month in the ACT is now through the MHCC ACT website (<https://mhccact.org.au/mental-health-month/>). The previous specific website for Mental Health Month ACT is still in operation and is expected that redirections will be in place from that website to their new locations.

Theme for Mental Health Month

The theme for Mental Health Month ACT in 2023 continues to be Awareness, Belonging, Connection



Awareness is about understanding how to maintain and boost our mental wellbeing, realising when we need to reach out for help, and knowing where to get it.



Belonging is about looking out for each other, feeling safe and supported, and knowing that we're not alone: there are others going through the same thing.



Connection is about our relationships: not just with our friends, families and those we care about, but also the groups, clubs, and networks we rely on to help us stay happy and healthy.

Activities

For Mental Health Month there are many events being held throughout October.

Visit the [Mental Health Month ACT](#) webpage for details about key events and other planned events by clicking on the image below.

In 2022 the Mental Health and Wellbeing Expo was held online and featured pre-recorded presentations from a variety of services in the ACT. These presentations are still available from the MHM ACT website (<https://www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/2022-expo-recordings>).

For 2023, a mental health information and resource hub will be set up in Westfield Belconnen in lieu of an Expo. Details are still forthcoming but it is expected to run over a few days during the third week of October.

Key Events

Below are the key events for Mental Health Month. At the time of print, further details such as time were still to be worked out

1. Mental Health Month Launch Tues 3 Oct
2. Mental Health and Wellbeing Information hub

Mental Health Month Awards

There are many exceptional people and initiatives working to promote and improve mental health understanding, awareness, service provision and wellbeing in the Canberra community.

The ACT Mental Health Month Awards recognise the achievements of individuals, groups, organisations, businesses and initiatives in the area of mental health in the ACT.

The awards are a sector-wide initiative coordinated by the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT and implemented by the Mental Health Month ACT Advisory Committee.

The date, time and venue for the awards presentation are still to be confirmed. Check the Mental Health Month ACT webpage for details.

Award nominations are now open!

Please note that nominations are only being received online.

To access the nomination guide and nomination forms click on the following box

or visit: <https://form.jotform.com/221927471968065>

Nominations close at midnight Sunday 24 September.



2023 Award and scholarship categories

Awards

- Mentally Healthy Community Award
- Innovated Person-centred Valued Supports Award
- Research Evaluation Award
- Mental Health Carer Award
- Community Connection through Recovery Award
- Leadership through Lived Experience Award: Consumer
- Lived Experience Ally Recognition Award (LEARA)*
- David Perrin Award*

Scholarships

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Award*

These scholarships (worth up to \$500 a year to a maximum of \$2,000 in total) recognise mental health consumers who are furthering their education. They are intended to cover general education expenses such as computers, course texts and course fees.

Rufus Scholarship*

Established in December 2019 by a private donor, this Scholarship provides an annual grant of up to \$600 to support a mental health consumer who would not otherwise have the financial means to do so to further or continue their education.

MHCC ACT Training Scholarships

These three scholarships provide grants of \$1000 each to smaller organisations whose main work is with marginalised and minority population groups, to be used to undertake MHCC ACT's mental health training.

*Provided by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network.

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 in the ACT

Associate

- May have lived experience of mental illness but does not live and/or accesses services in the ACT
- Is a carer or support person of someone with mental illness
- Supports the aims of the Network
(Associate memberships need 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"/> Mx <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Preferred Pronouns	<input type="checkbox"/> He/Him <input type="checkbox"/> She/Her <input type="checkbox"/> They/Them <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 General Meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Address	<input type="checkbox"/> Postal Address	<input type="checkbox"/> Email
<i>Please note we are required by law to provide all members with notice and other documentation about General Meetings.</i>			

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"/> Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Please contact me about... (Primary Members Only)
<input type="checkbox"/> Free training events <input type="checkbox"/> Discussions, forums and projects <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer opportunities (with reimbursement of costs) <input type="checkbox"/> Helping with events

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

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.



Opening hours

Monday to Friday 9am-3pm
(excluding public holidays)



Level 2 Room 11 Griffin Centre
20 Genge Street, Canberra City
GPO Box 836 Canberra ACT 2601



02 6230 5796
actmhcncn@actmhcncn.org.au



actmhcncn.org.au
facebook.com/actmhcncn/
youtube.com/@actmhcncn

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.

Drop-In is held on Thursdays from 10am to 12pm, both online and in person. Online Drop-In continues providing a platform for social contact purposes.

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=MV NkaWZIR21wWDMrSjY1MVhkZ2JjQT09>

Meeting ID: 853 8926 3153

Passcode: 991826

A dedicated Drop-In Officer is available to help consumers accessing our facilities or in need of information.

At times, due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances, Drop-In may be cancelled or need to close a little early. If this happens, we try to give members as much notice as possible.

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 Jo by email to dropin@actmhcncn.org.au

Due to the nature of the Network's business, there are times when the Drop-In service unfortunately will be closed, and we try to keep members informed of any closures as early as possible.

