

**Mental Health
Australia**

Annual Issues & Opportunities Workshop — Webinar Report

Human Rights, Advocacy and Sport with
Craig Foster AM

24 February 2021



Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

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Introduction: Annual issues & opportunities workshop

Each year, Mental Health Australia hosts a two-day Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop for members of the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives (National Register) and the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF). This year, members from the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group from the Embrace Multicultural Mental Health Project were also invited to attend.

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to impact the ability to meet face-to-face, the two-day workshop was not possible. In its place through 2020 and the beginning of 2021 Mental Health Australia is hosting a series of webinars for these Lived Experience groups.

These webinars aim to further develop the representative skills of mental health consumers and carers already participating in national policy initiatives. In particular, the webinars are designed to develop representatives' advocacy, policy development, and leadership skills. The webinars also provide important networking opportunities for representatives.

The webinars in early 2021 are continuing with the theme from the 2020 webinar series: **Consumer and Carer Leadership in a Time of Crisis – Social, Environmental and Political.**

The second event for 2021 was held on 24 February. We welcomed special guest Craig Foster AM to speak.

Craig Foster is a former player with, and captain of, the Australian National Team (Socceroos). A highly respected media presenter, he is also a global advocate for diversity and social harmony, known for his contribution to Australian society well beyond the playing field.

Craig's professional soccer career included playing in Australia, Asia and England. He made 29 appearances for the Socceroos including as Captain. Following his retirement from the field, Craig enjoyed a multiple Logie-winning broadcast career with the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) alongside some of the great icons of football broadcasting including Johnny Warren and Les Murray.

Craig is perhaps equally as well known for his work beyond the field or screen, through the social programs he has developed and supports as well as his advocacy for sport and human rights.

Craig was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2021 for his significant services to multiculturalism, human rights and refugee support organisations, and to football.

This report provides highlights from the webinar and a summary of the key themes and outcomes raised during the webinar as well as feedback from attendees.



Webinar 2: Human Rights, Advocacy and Sport with Craig Foster AM

Key themes raised by Craig Foster

- Sport is one of the biggest industries in the world which focuses on ‘the betterment of humanity’, however has not done enough to advocate for the harm that comes to people outside of sport.
- Advocating for human rights is often framed as an act of compassion, and it is, but we shouldn’t be expecting everyone to be compassionate – they need to act for the simple fact that it’s the right thing to do. Equality is not about feelings.
- In other industries such as in entertainment, people are starting to expect more of the people they follow in terms of political engagement and the same is starting to happen in sport. It’s becoming more difficult for people to stay silent on issues.
- It’s often not in people’s commercial interests to speak up on issues.
- We must get those who are in detention out as soon as possible. They shouldn’t be there in the first place. Many members of the public are convinced that refugees and asylum seekers are not human beings through a very effective and long-standing media campaign. This is, however, being broken down.

Key themes raised by consumers and carers during the training

- Not everyone in the community understands human rights and the language advocates use. We need to do more to educate the public on what human rights are.
- There is a challenge with so many issues within the sector on arriving at a shared key message.
- People with a lived experience are harmed and voices ignored by treatments that shorten their lives. How can embed a human rights approach more deeply in this area?
- There is an interesting question around finding a figurehead for mental health – and does it need to be someone with a lived experience?



Feedback

An evaluation survey was sent to all 15 participants following the webinar, which eight webinar participants responded to. These responses help gauge the level of participant satisfaction with the webinar as well as participants' reflections and insights.

Example Reflections

75% of Evaluation Survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the webinar overall.

"I found Craig's presentation so interesting and his passion and commitment to the range of human rights, the disenfranchised & refugee and racism issues inspiring."

"It was such a thought-provoking presentation."

"Think he is fantastic, brave and a determinedly quiet achiever for the betterment of mental health."



Appendix 1: Webinar Attendees

National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives (the National Register)

The National Register is a pool of 60 trained mental health consumer and carer representatives from across Australia. National Register members work at the national level to provide a strong consumer and carer voice in the mental health sector. The National Register is a Mental Health Australia project.

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF)

The NMHCCF is a combined national voice for mental health consumers and carers. The NMHCCF listen, learn, advocate and influence in matters of mental health reform. Mental Health Australia auspices and has a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the NMHCCF.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group

The CALD Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group is comprised of a CALD mental health consumer and a carer representative from each state and territory of Australia. The CALD Group includes a passionate, energised and diverse mix of voices, and provides advice to the National Multicultural Mental Health Project Alliance based on members' lived experience and connections to their communities.



Appendix 2: 2020 Workshop Working Group

The 2020 Annual Workshop planning was informed by a working group of consumer and carer representatives, who helped shape the theme, speakers and presenters for the webinar series.

The working group developed the theme of “Consumer and Carer Leadership in a Time of Crisis – Social, Environmental and Political” for this year’s Annual Workshop, which provided a focus for the webinar series.

Working group members included:

- Susan Adam
Carer Representative — National Register Member
- Keiran Booth
Carer Representative — National Register Member
- Fay Jackson
Consumer Representative — National Register Member
- Noel Muller
Consumer Representative — National Register member
- Angela Rao
Carer Representative — National Register member
- Carli Sheers
Consumer Representative — National Register Member



For more information please contact the Consumer and Carer Team at Mental Health Australia on 02 6285 3100 or at natreg@mhaustralia.org.

Mental Health Australia is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector and committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians. It was established in 1997 as the first independent peak body in Australia to represent the full spectrum of mental health stakeholders and issues. Mental Health Australia members include national organisations representing consumers, carers, special needs groups, clinical service providers, professional bodies, public and private mental health service providers, researchers and state/territory community mental health peak bodies.



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Mental Health Australia is the peak independent national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

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