



2019 Annual Issues & Opportunities Workshop Report

May 2019



Mentally healthy people,
Mentally healthy communities

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Introduction

Annual Issues & Opportunities Workshop

Each year, Mental Health Australia hosts an 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 National Multicultural Mental Health Project were also invited to attend.

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

The 2019 Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop was held in Melbourne on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 May 2019 and was attended by 66 mental health consumer and carer representatives.

The theme "Uniting our Voices – People, Policy & Purpose" provided a thought-provoking program and opportunities to advance participants voices as consumers and carers.

An evaluation survey was sent to all participants following the 2019 Workshop, which 53% of attendees responded to. These responses have helped gauge the level of participant satisfaction with each workshop session as well as participants' reflections and insights.

This report provides highlights from the two-day event and a summary of the key themes raised by mental health consumers and carers during the workshop sessions or through the subsequent workshop evaluation survey.

2019 Workshop Attendees

National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives

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

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



CALD Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group

This group is comprised of a CALD mental health consumer representative and a CALD mental health 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.

2019 Workshop Working Group

The 2019 Workshop was informed by a working group of consumer and carer representatives, who helped shape the theme and agenda for the workshop.

The agenda was designed to include a combination of presentations by invited guest speakers as well as networking opportunities and table activities. The working group also ensured that some light-hearted moments were incorporated into each day and that a chill-out room was made available to participants throughout the workshop.

The working group developed the workshop theme – “Uniting our Voices – People, Policy & Purpose” – which provided a focus throughout the two-day event.

Working group members included:

Keiran Booth
Carer Representative - National Register Member

Yvonne Quadros
Carer Representative - National Register Member

Keir Saltmarsh
Consumer Representative – NMHCCF Member

Carli Sheers
Consumer Representative - National Register Member

Nevena Simic
Consumer Representative – National Register Member

Hayley Solich
Carer Representative – NMHCCF and National Register Member

Facilitator

The facilitator for the 2019 Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop was Kim Koop. Kim is a professional speaker and experienced facilitator who has extensive experience in the mental health sector. She was the CEO of Mental Health Victoria (then VICSERV) the peak body for mental health services for 8.5 years and a founding member of Community Mental Health Australia.

Visual / Graphic Facilitation

Day two of the workshop was captured by graphic recorder Jasper Potter. Jasper captured the conversations by taking visual notes of the day with words and pictures. These are shown throughout this report.



Day 1: Thursday 23 May 2019

10:00 – 10:10	Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and opening	
10:10 – 10:20	Acknowledgement of those that have gone before us and whose work we continue to build upon	
10:20 – 10:30	Building on existing capabilities and strengths	
10:30 – 11:15	Special Guest Speakers - Homelessness and Mental Health Jenny Smith, CEO Council to Homeless Persons & Christine Thirkell, Council to Homeless Persons	
11:15 – 11:40	Morning Break	
11:40 – 12:30	Setting the scene - Mental Health Australia Policy Update, Frank Quinlan, CEO Mental Health Australia	
12:30 – 1:15	Lunch	
1:15 – 1:45	Announcements and processing of the morning session	
1:45 – 2:30	Main Room Advanced healthcare directives and tackling restrictive practice in Western Australia Nathan Gibson, Chief Psychiatrist WA	Breakout room Peer Workforce Terminology Heather Nowak and Katrina Clarke, NMHCCF
2:30 – 3:00	Afternoon Break including a Randomised Control/Coffee Trial (RCT)	
3:00 – 3:10	Announcements and feedback from the RCT	
3:10 – 4:00	Diverse Voices Workshop facilitated by The National Multicultural Mental Health Project	
4:00 – 4:45	Other Voices Workshop facilitated by Kim Koop with: Paula Arro, National PHN Lived Experience Engagement Network Jeremy Coggin, Mental Health Carers Australia	
4:45	Capturing the wisdom from Day One - End of day announcements	



Special guest speakers - Homelessness and Mental Health - Jenny Smith, CEO Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) & Christine Thirkell, CHP

"Homelessness is not 'rooflessness'. A home means security, stability, privacy, safety and being able to control your space." www.chp.org.au

Jenny Smith provided information on the state of homelessness in Australia including:

- The general rate of homelessness in Australia is 47 per 10,000.
- The indigenous rate of homelessness is 488 per 10,000.
- People seeking assistance has increased by 18% in the last 5 years.
- 1 in 4 attribute homelessness to family violence.
- 60% are women and 1 in 4 are children.
- Housing affordability is the major contributor to homelessness, with the gap between household earnings and the cost of dwellings escalating significantly since the 1990s.

Christine Thirkell, a consumer champion, shared her lived experience of homelessness, illustrating the far-reaching effects of how a lack of affordability and support impacted her and her family.

One of Christine's key messages is the longer a person is homeless, the greater the negative impacts on mental health.

Christine explained to participants that they can become active and show their support by accessing the Council to Homelessness website and sign the Everybody's Home petition <https://everybodyshome.com.au/petition/>

The morning session ended with the reflection:

"How can I recover without safe cover?"

Key themes raised by workshop participants

- Official figures greatly understate the rate of homelessness. This results in less funding to address homelessness.
- Advocacy for home security to save tenancies is required. Having secure housing plays an important role in a person's mental health.

Reflections

77% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Jenny Smith & Christine Thirkell's presentation.

"The stats on homelessness were shocking. The lived experience presentation was authentic."

"Critical area for discussion, could have gone on longer and I wouldn't have lost interest."



Setting the scene - Frank Quinlan, CEO Mental Health Australia

Frank Quinlan introduced the theme for the workshop as “Uniting our Voices – People, Policy & Purpose”, providing a timely and exciting opportunity to advance the voice of consumers and carers and promote unification within the mental health sector.

He invited participants to consider the following:

- The Prime Minister and the Treasurer are both on the record committing their support to address mental health, with provisions in the Federal Budget.
- Politicians from all sides of politics have publicly shared their support for mental health.
- The Productivity Commission’s Inquiry into Mental Health is a once in a generation opportunity to effect systemic change.

He encouraged the group to unite and encourage governments to adopt the Productivity Commission’s recommendations with urgency and funding.

Reflections

88% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Frank’s opening address.

“I appreciate Frank’s desire to improve our optimism about the future of mental health in Australia”

Advanced healthcare directives and tackling restrictive practice in Western Australia - Nathan Gibson, Chief Psychiatrist WA

Nathan Gibson spoke to the group about the WA experience with advanced healthcare directives. He discussed how they are legally binding and can be a component of shared decision making – empowering consumers and carers to drive the conversation around treatment options. He cited statistics from the United States that showed advanced care directives reduced compulsory admissions.

He also spoke to restrictive practices and seclusion rates. He cited WA research that has shown reducing seclusion and restraint rates resulted in lower rates of injuries to healthcare workers.

Key themes raised by workshop participants

- Not all doctors, medical staff and emergency responders are being trained in how to use advance directives. Inconsistent, or lack of training can result in advance directives not being followed.
- It would be good to have a national register of advance directives, beyond My Health Record. A central register could assist the patients, family and medical staff.



- There is an opportunity for other states and territories to aim for higher standards in relation to seclusion and restraint practices.
- Jurisdictions should consider reviewing restrictive practices, and not just when people are in care but also during transport.

Reflections

85% of workshop evaluation survey respondents that attended the session reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Nathan Gibson's presentation.

"Some fabulous ideas to support uptake of advance directives and to advocate for elimination of restrictive practices"

Peer Workforce Terminology - Heather Nowak and Katrina Clarke, NMHCCF

NMHCCF members Heather Nowak and Katrina Clarke facilitated this breakout session. Participants were asked to think about and indicate the terminology they prefer and definitions of Peer Workforce.

Key themes raised by workshop participants

- Having peer-led sessions and discussions such as this was highly valued by National Register and NMHCCF members.
- Members advised it was a great opportunity to give feedback and be engaged.

Diverse Voices - The National Multicultural Mental Health Project

Ruth Das, National Project Manager, outlined the project, which provides a national focus on mental health and suicide prevention for people from CALD backgrounds. The project is working towards an equitable mental health system which responds well to the needs of Australia's multicultural population. The project aims to:

- Provide support to organisations to evaluate and improve their cultural responsiveness.
- Establish and promote a quality-assured knowledge exchange and repository platform.
- Increase mental health awareness, knowledge and capacity in CALD communities.

Workshop participants then discussed CALD mental health with members of the CALD Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group.

Key themes raised by workshop participants

- Mental health services need to be culturally sensitive to provide improved outcomes and increase mental health awareness in all communities. There is a lack of multicultural men accessing services because there is a lack of appropriate services. There is also a risk CALD religious faith may be interpreted as mental illness.



- There needs to be more effort put towards how we support people from CALD backgrounds with trauma histories. There is a lack of trauma-informed care available.
- There is an opportunity to employ more bilingual workers in the CALD mental health space. Bilingual workers break down barriers.
- It's great to have this project supporting CALD mental health consumers and carers going into the community and reducing stigma about mental health.

Reflections

86% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the Diverse Voices session.

"Excellent coverage of what is ahead in reference to this area of work"

Other Voices

Paula Arro, National Primary Health Network (PHN) Lived Experience Engagement Network

Paula Arro spoke to what is being done to incorporate the lived experience voice within PHNs. In July 2018, the PHN Lived Experience Engagement Network was established. It has worked on benchmarking the performance of PHNs in incorporating the lived experience, including representation in the governance structure, paid positions for people with a lived experience and training and professional development opportunities for employees.

Jeremy Coggin, Mental Health Carers Australia (MHCA)

Jeremy Coggin explained MHCA's objective is to advocate and embed the voice of mental health carers into the mental health conversation. He spoke to the importance of co-design and creating a shared language amongst the various bodies representing the carer voice when engaging with key stakeholders (PHNs and the NDIA) to create policy that results in better outcomes for carers.

Reflections

78% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Paula and Jeremy's presentations.

"Gained good knowledge"



Day 2: Friday 24 May 2019

9:00 – 10:10	Welcome back and update
9:10 – 10:05	Special guest speaker - Why hard conversations matter - Simon Longstaff, Ethics Centre
10:05 – 10:45	New developments in the NDIA/NDIS - Gerry Naughtin, Strategic Advisor Mental Health at National Disability Insurance Agency
10:45 – 11:05	Morning Tea - RCT
11:05 – 11:55	Voices in Action - Scheduled member updates - Mountains of Hope Peer Network (MoHPN) - Michael Burge, Strengthening the consumer voice in mental health research - Carli Sheers, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Noel Muller
11:55 – 12:45	National Mental Health Commission - Christine Morgan (CEO) - Sector Update, Marcus Nichols - Evaluations of the 5 th Plan
12:45 - 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 1:45	Announcements and capture emerging issues
1:45 – 2:15	Peer Soap Box: emerging issues and opportunities, five x five
2:15 – 3:00	The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health - An Update - Stephen King, Presiding Commissioner
3:00 – 3:50	Uniting around the common purpose
3:50 – 3:55	A word from the secretariat
3:55	Close of the workshop

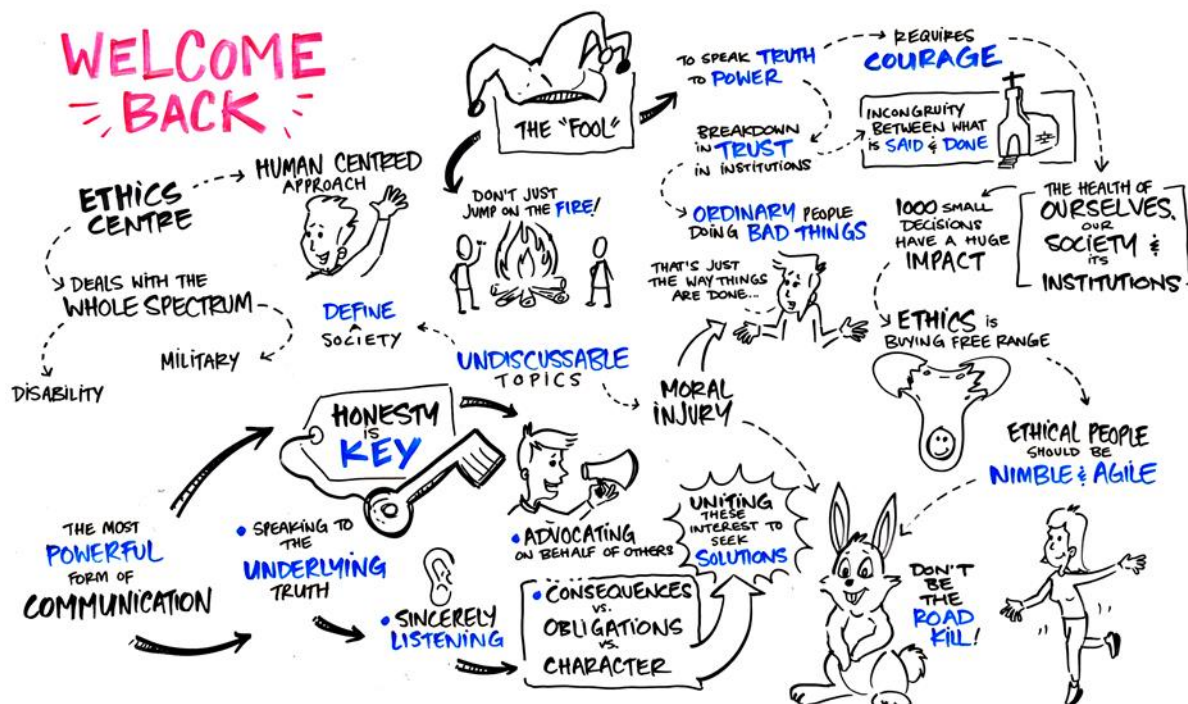


Special guest speaker - Why hard conversations matter - Simon Longstaff, Ethics Centre

Simon Longstaff delivered a compelling and engaging presentation. He used the analogy of the fool in Shakespearean prose, explaining that the function of the fool is to speak truth to power, and emphasising that it takes moral courage to question the status quo.

He encouraged all present to continue to have hard conversations and advocate and represent their constituents with integrity and honesty.

"Courage is not the absence of fear says Osho, it is rather the total presence of fear with the courage to face it" The Joy of Living Dangerously - Osho



Key themes raised by workshop participants

- Participants gained useful tools and learnt some new ways of thinking about and addressing tricky situations.
- Many people reported it will help them in future difficult conversations and felt they would benefit from a future session like this one.

Reflections

96% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied Simon Longstaff's presentation.



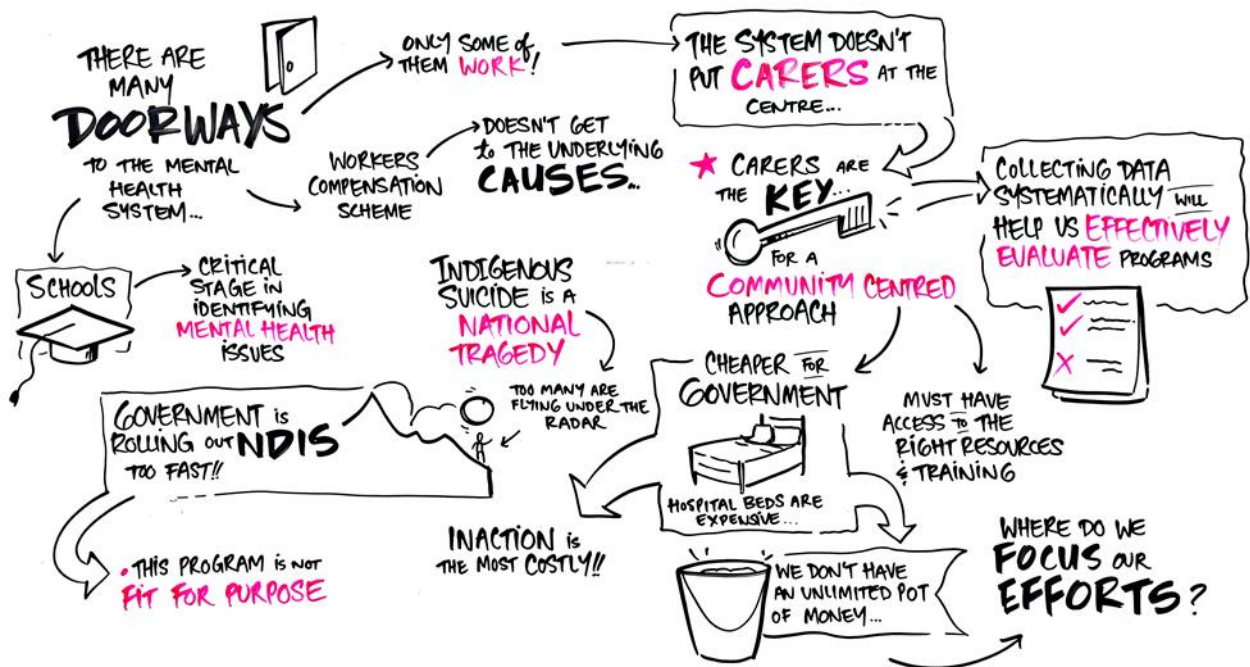
"This was the standout presentation for me. So many great ideas how to advocate and validation for ethical practice"

"Excellent, relevant, challenging"

New developments in the NDIA/NDIS - Gerry Naughtin, Strategic Advisor Mental Health at National Disability Insurance Agency

Gerry Naughtin spoke about new developments in the NDIA. Key changes and emphasis going forward include:

- Taking an episodic approach.
- Reaching out to people by building linkages and referrals.
- Better response and support for people that are ineligible for the scheme, working with PHNs, the Department of Health and DSS to provide other pathways of support.
- Engaging more with Mental Health Australia and Carers Australia to review current processes to be more inclusive and incorporate the lived experience.



Key themes raised by workshop participants

- There needs to be an urgent revision of the psychosocial aspects of the NDIS. People are seen as either "not acute enough" for high-level support but "too acute" for others. Those who are turned away from services when they reach out for help are at the highest risk.



- It is great to hear PHNs doing work towards incorporating lived experience into their work. It will be good to see more paid positions, training and support for lived experience workers.
- There needs to be more support for those who could become participants of the NDIS to make good applications and for those who struggle to advocate for themselves to have an advocate to assist them.

Reflections

83% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Gerry Naughtin's presentation.

"Good to know what they are up to and that they are beginning to get some insights into where the NDIS needs to improve"

Voices in Action

Noel Mueller - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Australian Government is due to report back to the Convention Secretariat later this year on their progress and response to questions posed by the Convention. A component of this is the development of a shadow report. Noel Muller encouraged all workshop participants to respond to survey questions so they can be included in the shadow report to be presented in Geneva in September this year.

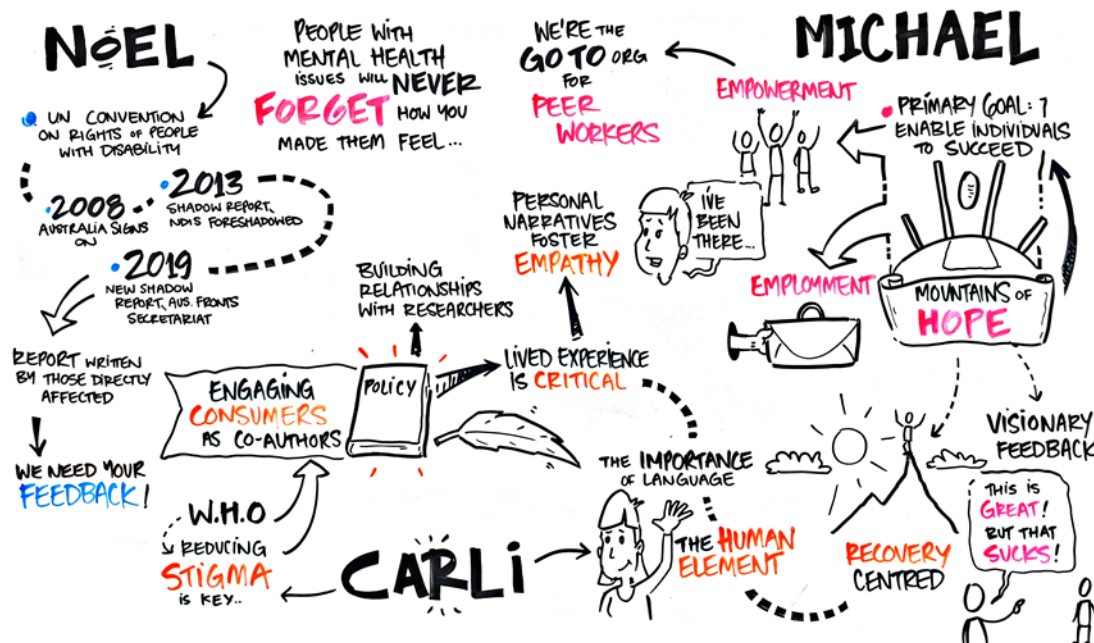
Carli Sheers – Strengthening the consumer voice in mental health research

Carli Sheers shared her experience working on a project with researchers to co-produce and deliver human-centred tools for training researchers. She explained that engaging with consumers can inspire critical reflection to challenge tradition and outdated thinking. Further, personal narratives foster empathy and decrease stigma.

Michael Burge - Mountains of Hope Peer Network (MoHPN)

Michael Burge discussed the Mountains of Hope Peer Network (MoHPN) that he helped establish in Toowoomba. The MoHPN aims to support the peer workforce, by designing training courses to suit needs. To date, 32 members have been trained in Mental Health Peer Support and 14 have obtained employment.





Reflections

75% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with this session.

National Mental Health Commission - Christine Morgan - Sector Update, Marcus Nicol - Evaluations of the 5th Plan

Christine Morgan has recently taken up the role as CEO of the National Health Commission. She provided an update on their work and explained her primary goal is to hear from all areas of the sector. She noted:

- 'Mental health' is broad, there is a need for a more nuanced conversation.
- Lived and living experience is kept front and centre when making policy decisions.
- Systemic change is needed to provide person-centred care, with a funding system that is flexible to support it.

Marcus Nicol, Director, Monitoring and Reporting Team, provided an overview of the National 5th Mental Health Plan survey results and sought input from workshop participants on how to improve the response rate for future surveys. Some key suggestions were increased engagement with social media on multiple platforms, engaging with CALD community leaders and to consider the language of the survey.



Key themes raised by workshop participants

- It is always useful to hear from the National Mental Health Commission on what they are focusing on.
- Updates from the Commission help National Register and NMHCCF members know where important work is up to and if there is anything upcoming they can be engaged with and provide input to.



Reflections

68% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the National Mental Health Commission presentation.

"Good to get an understanding of the issues"

Peer Soap Box

Workshop participants were invited to give a short presentation on a topic of their choice, as a way to share news and opportunities of interest to their peers.

Fay Jackson emphasised that true co-design comes from opening up the conversation with stakeholders and using words they can relate and respond to. She discussed the importance of being brave and the power of language in shaping attitudes. She encouraged 'person-led' and 'people' services rather than 'consumers', 'need' versus 'diagnosis', and 'discrimination' versus 'stigma' as a means of driving inclusive, effective person-led services.



Juanita Koeijers highlighted the importance of including alcohol and other drugs in the discussion on mental health. Department of Health statistics report that 53% of mental health presentations involve some sort of substance use. She emphasised the value of self-care and nutrition as first-line harm reduction tools.

Michael Burge spoke of the peer work done by the Mates4Mates network for veterans. They have a broad social media presence and approximately 4000 peer workers. They run a wide variety of activities and last year Michael ran his first suicide prevention course for veterans.

Ellie Hodges spoke to her experience and the value of 'safe to fail experiments'. She is currently involved in a privately funded collaboration with a university in South Australia, exploring how people with lived experience can be leaders and drive and lead systemic change.

Andris Markovs shared that the WA Government has just announced a grant of \$3.6m for the establishment of a statewide recovery college. There will be a hub and several regional satellites and is expected to come online in 2020.

Áine Tierney and Rosslyn Williams spoke about the current challenges of consumer and carer voices being heard in the ACT. They spoke of the need for a national advice and support framework to provide ongoing support for advocates and peer workers to unite across the nation.



Reflections

91% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the Peer Soap Box session.

"It was wonderful to hear some informative and passionate presentations"



The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health – An Update - Stephen King, Presiding Commissioner

Stephen King spoke to participants about the Inquiry into Mental Health, noting extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation has occurred and 500+ submissions have been received by the Productivity Commission.

Key emerging themes:

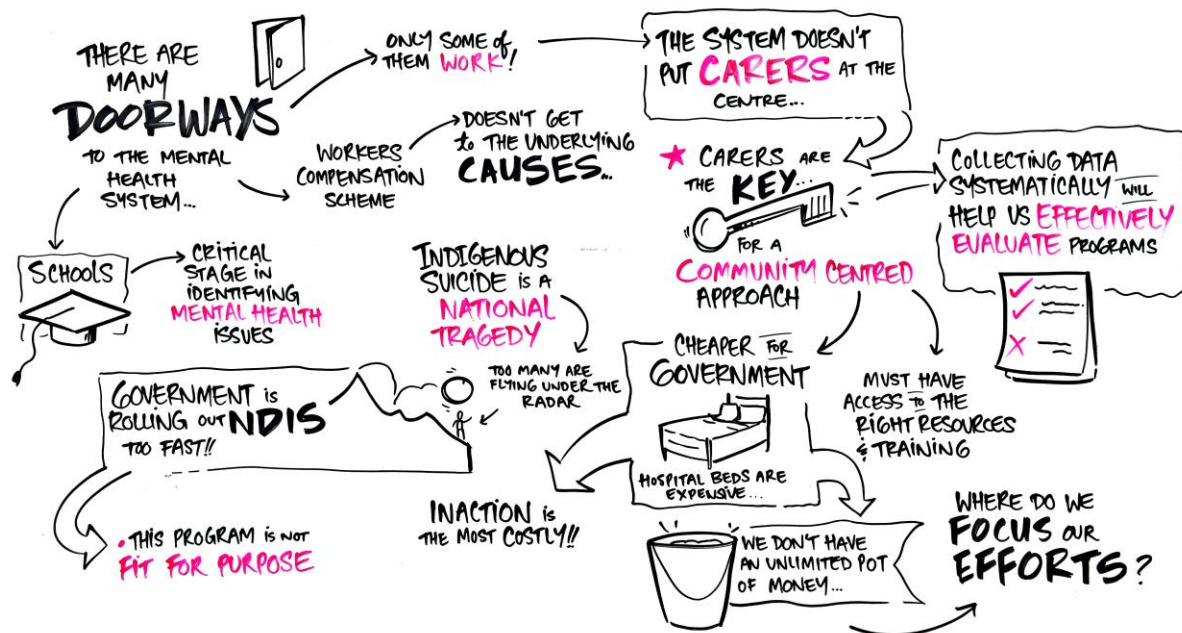
- Fragmentation of services and recognising the lack of timely services, particularly in regional areas.
- Emergency department diversionary programs are sparse on the ground.
- There are many gateways to mental health services, but many of these doors don't work.
- Need to create an investment mindset amongst governments to provide a targeted multi-pronged response to providing mental health services.
- Lack of public housing.
- Significant role of carers and 'in-community' care.
- Indigenous suicide rate is five times the average rate.
- Need for continuous support services.
- Long lasting solution needs to include data collection and evaluation to assess effectiveness in real-time

The final findings and recommendations of the Productivity Commission will be presented to Government in May 2020.

Key themes raised by workshop participants

- There is a lack of outreach services for communities that are isolated by geography, ethnicity, or powerlessness. These groups need to be connected with appropriate services.
- Patients from mental health units are discharged into unsuitable housing/ caravans/ substandard motels and not receiving enough follow up support.
- The NDIS is being rolled out too fast and with not enough consultation with mental health consumers and carers.





Reflections

95% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied with Stephen King's presentation.

"A great presentation by Stephen. I felt optimistic about the Commission's report and their support of mental health reform"

"One of the most invaluable presentations, gave us insight into what the real issues were"

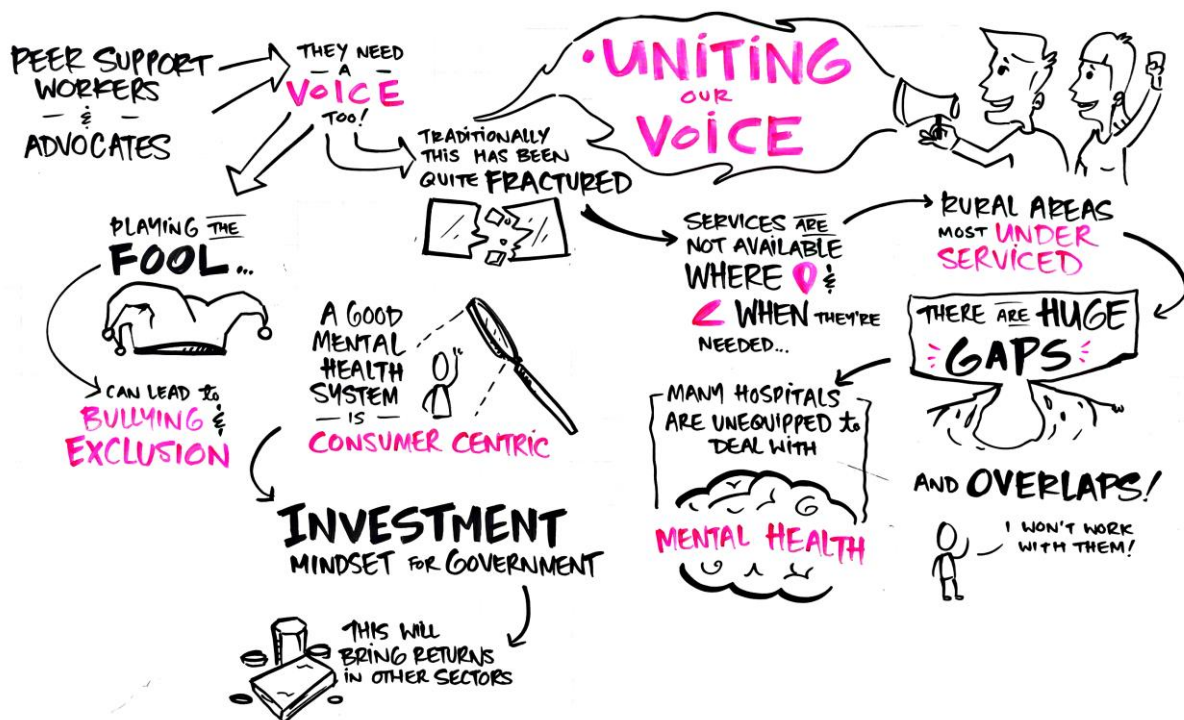
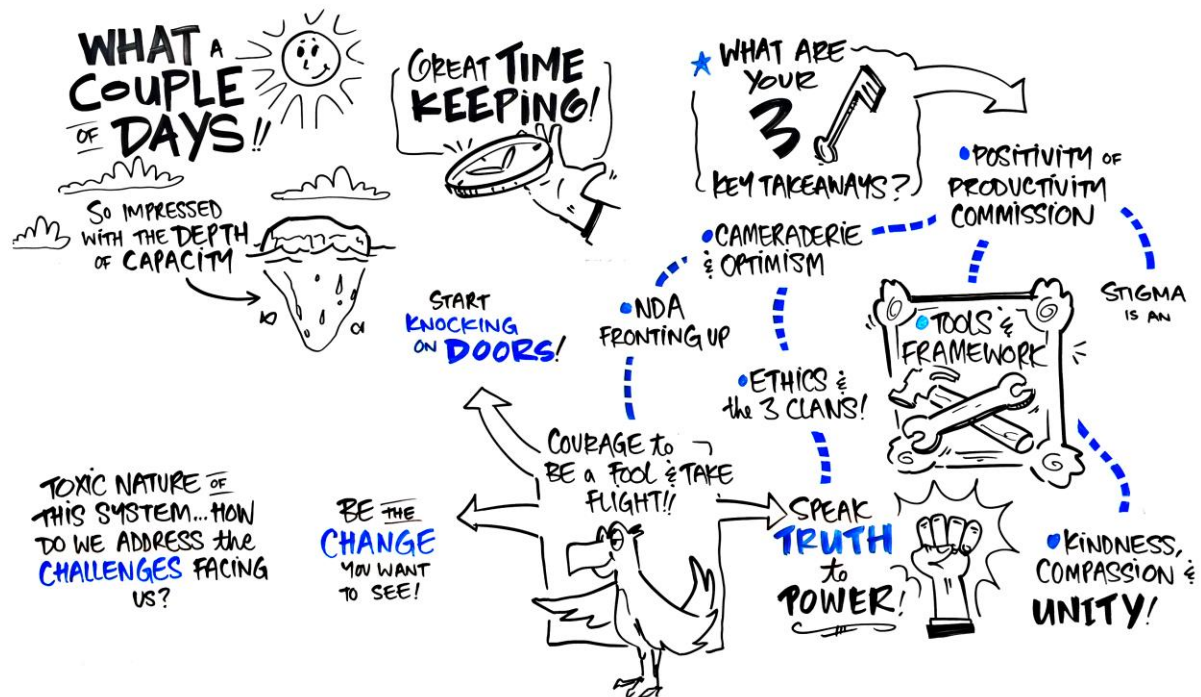


Uniting around the common purpose

Workshop participants were invited to review and reflect on the past two days. Reflections of participants included:

- *Renewed optimism*
- *Courage to have the difficult conversations*
- *Communication built on with kindness and compassion*
- *Positivity of the Productivity Commission in reforming service delivery (stigma is a missing cost)*
- *New NDIS examination of psychosocial supports, including outreach and peer work*
- *Carers are the backbone of the mental health system*
- *Hope for the future*
- *Expertise of consumers and carers to support, drive and inform the future*
- *The need for unity to support the Productivity Commission to make it happen*
- *The importance of the collective voice to hopefully bring change*
- *Better faith in the pointy-headed economists*
- *Understanding of our work being deeply grounded in a sense of ethics*
- *Simon's 3 clans: consequentialists, obligationists, visionaries*
- *Importance of kindness and compassion*
- *We have been given hope from the Productivity Commission*
- *It was good to have the NDIA front up and be answerable to mental health carers and consumers*
- *It was good to know the size of the homelessness problem and the intersect with mental health*
- *Maslow is always relevant*
- *Solidarity*
- *Comradery with renewed optimism*
- *Appreciated that Stephen King acknowledged when he did not know something*
- *Possibilities to consider going forward include contacting the Minister's advisor, as well as representatives from the opposition and state and territory governments*
- *Co-production is the desired level of participation and is very authentic*





Reflections

87% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the reflection session.



Conclusion

The 2019 Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop provided an opportunity for members of the National Register and NMHCCF to network and learn from each other and invited guests (including the CALD Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group).

The theme of the workshop, "Uniting our Voices – People, Policy & Purpose" provided a rich platform for discussion, and participants expressed a high level of satisfaction in the workshop overall. Participants will take their renewed connections and learnings forward in their ongoing national advocacy efforts.

Reflections

100% of workshop evaluation survey respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the workshop overall.

"Very well run and facilitated by Kim. ALL speakers were productive and related to the work I am engaged with. Well done for an extraordinary effort by those involved"

"An excellent opportunity to learn, network and contribute"

"Best workshop ever"

"Great speakers. Brilliant facilitator. Wonderful organisation"

"As always, the workshop was stimulating and energising for me"

More information

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



Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

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

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