



MEDIA RELEASE

19 September 2012

New legislation welcomed by advocates

The Mental Health Council of Australia today welcomed the introduction of Commonwealth legislation to protect the ability of contracted non-government organisations to advocate for better policy and legislation.

“Non-government organisations, who are delivering services at the frontline, are often best placed to share their insights to advance better policy and better legislation”, said Frank Quinlan, CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia, and member of the Gillard Government’s Not-for-Profit Reform Council.

“Governments should not gag the capacity of organisations to speak out, just because they are delivering services and receiving public funds”, said Mr Quinlan.

“These organisations often deal directly with the consequences of poor public policy and inadequate legislation and, as a result, are best placed to propose solutions. Gag clauses in government contracts should never prevent this from happening,” he continued.

“The proposed legislation to outlaw gag clauses further enshrines the principles agreed to in the Gillard Government’s National Compact with the Non-Government Sector. It sets a new standard for governments wanting to work with non-government organisations throughout Australia, to improve the circumstances of some of the country’s most vulnerable citizens,” said Mr Quinlan.

The Mental Health Council of Australia is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector, committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians.

Media Contact: Frank Quinlan, Chief Executive Officer - 02 6285 3100 or 0409 655 460