



**Mental Health
Council of Australia**

NEWSLETTER

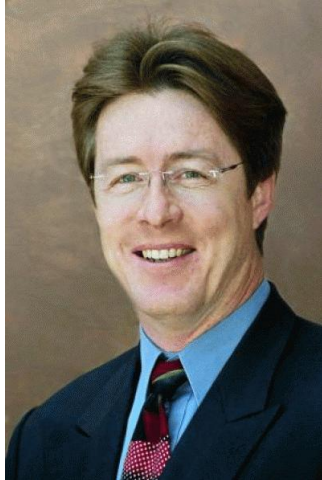
**November 2011
Theme: World Mental Health Day**

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World Mental Health Day

By Frank Quinlan, MHCA CEO



It's often said that some of us are "glass half full people" - optimistic, hopeful always prepared to see the positive. Others are "glass half empty" - pessimistic, cynical and always focussed on the negative.

In Mental Health Week 2011, it is fair to ask whether we should be glass half full or glass half empty when we consider the plight of those experiencing mental illness.

In 2011, those of us who are "glass half full" should get a pretty fair run. We have seen a focus on mental health issues in the community that is perhaps unprecedented. From his first day as 2010 Australian of the Year, Professor Patrick McGorry worked hard to raise the community's awareness of mental health issues and to advocate for greater government spending. While not everyone shares Professor McGorry's emphasis on early intervention via the Headspace model, no one could argue credibly that his efforts, and the efforts of all those who fought alongside him, have been anything other than positive for those experiencing mental illness.

More hope yet more would be gained from the role that some of our high profile politicians and public figures played in bringing attention to mental illness in the community. The likes of former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett, and Coalition front bencher Andrew Robb have been instrumental in ensuring that mental health issues are discussed more widely than before, but also in giving hope that people with a mental illness can continue to make a contribution in important roles in the community. Following his battles with depression, Andrew Robb was even touted as a potential leader of the federal Liberal Party, a circumstance surely not possible just a few years ago.

The 2011-12 Commonwealth Budget provided further hope to the optimistic amongst us. While an investment of some \$1.5 billion in new spending (albeit spread over 5 years) was important on its own, I think even more hope can be gained from the fact that it was such a high profile issue in the budget announcements. The fact that a Commonwealth Government announcing its budget would effectively use mental health as "headline issue" should give rise to a hope that community awareness and concern has reached such a level that governments have to listen. The Gillard Government deserves credit for taking this initiative and both the Coalition and the Greens also deserve credit for the roles they each played in supporting the politics of mental health.

But sadly those glass half empty types among us still have a legitimate place in commentary on mental health.



We are still desperately short of mental health services. Those experiencing other forms of illness can generally gain rapid access to the services that they need, and this is almost universally true of those experiencing acute illness - regardless of their financial capacity. This is not true for many experiencing mental illness, and it is likely to take years yet to achieve this goal.

Our "mental health system" is still largely fragmented and disjointed, and it is often carers who are called upon to navigate their way through a maze of services and programs to ensure that their loved ones experiencing mental illness directly don't fall through the gaping cracks in the system.

While employment conditions are changing, too many employees still feel unable to ask their employer to take account of their mental illness, and too few employers take active steps to make sure their workplaces promote mental health and are supportive of those people experiencing mental illness and their carers in the same way they support people with any other form of illness.

On the question of the future, I am not sure yet which camp to join.

On the one hand I fear that next year, in Mental Health Week 2012, we might look back and count this year as mental health's moment in the sun - with public and political momentum lost or starting to wane as other issues force themselves onto what is likely to be a pre-election agenda.

On the other hand I hope that we have now come too far to go back. If mental health has secured a place in the public and political mind it will be hard for governments to continue ignore unmet need. The new National Mental Health Commission reporting to the Prime Minister and to parliament each year (starting in 2012) may be just what we need to ensure that the mental health glass is never emptied.

I guess whether we are glass half full or glass half empty, it is up to all of us to use events like Mental Health Week to make sure that mental health remains a "big issue".



World Mental Health Day Promotions

The Mental Health Council of Australia, in conjunction with an advertising agency (Arc Media) created public advertising across a range of media platforms to promote World Mental Health Day 2011.

We developed television advertisements in the form of Community Service Announcements and secured airtime on Channel 7 and Channel 9, and with the very generous support of the Pharma Collaboration, formed a partnership with SBS television to screen World Mental Health Day adverts over an extended scheduling timeframe.



World Mental Health Day Billboard (Adelaide)

The billboards and posters depict images of a range of people and promote World Mental Health Day, *10 October* and the tagline *Change Your Mind*. They were on display through September-October in most capital cities.

The billboards were eye-catching and extremely visual. They were designed to show a person through a range of emotions, from slightly forlorn to happy, and the message 'change your mind' can be interpreted as the hope and optimism of seeking help when needed.

The primary objective was to raise awareness of World Mental Health Day, with a related message about understanding mental health issues and the importance of seeking help and early intervention when needed. Unlike physical illness, most young people with mental health issues do not seek help. Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggest that less than a quarter of young people with a mental illness use mental health services.



In some cases, the rate is as low as 18 percent. Young people with substance use disorder are the least likely to use mental health services.

Raising awareness of and participation in World Mental Health Day was the overarching goal of this campaign. It is also likely that increased visibility and awareness will lead to some behavior or attitude changes in the most at-risk group. There is a website connected to World Mental Health Day – www.changeyourmind.org.au – targeted at young people and which provides mental health information and links.



World Mental Health Day Billboard (Sydney)

Media Coverage

With so many health 'days' on the calendar, World Mental Health Day – like so many other worthy and worthwhile days – can get a bit lost in the media cycle. This year, however, we saw increased media coverage and exposure.

As noted above, the MHCA screened awareness raising TV ads, displayed billboards and distributed posters and t-shirts. There was considerable radio coverage, with the MHCA conducting many interviews, as did Lifeline, the Minister for Mental Health, Mark Butler, and many state and territory organisations. On the Kerri Anne Kennerley Morning Show (Channel 9), Kerri Anne interviewed Mental Health Council of Australia Patron Peter Overton at length about mental health in Australia. She played the World Mental Health Day advert (which she called 'funky') and provided her viewers with a very good picture of mental health issues.

On 10 October, numerous supportive media releases were issued. Below are a few abstracts from media releases issued on the day.

Mark Butler - World Mental Health Day

"World Mental Health Day is an occasion to both acknowledge and work towards limiting the impact that mental health problems can have on individuals, families and the wider community", Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler said, speaking on the first World Mental Health Day since his appointment as Australia's first Commonwealth Mental Health Minister. "When you consider that almost half of all Australians - 45.5 per cent - will experience a mental disorder at some point in their lifetimes, it is obvious that this can affect every one of us quite directly", Mr Butler said.



“People with mental health problems are among some of the most vulnerable in our community and it is our responsibility to ensure they receive the care they need, when they need it.”

Mental Health Council of Australia - World Mental Health Day 2011

The Mental Health Council of Australia said 10 October 2011 is World Mental Health Day. World Mental Health Day is a time to recognise and acknowledge the advancements and progress we have made in ensuring all Australians have access to a quality mental health system. Over the past year we have seen many welcome initiatives in mental health. The Federal Government delivered a budget with substantial investment in new mental health services, the announcement of a Ten Year Roadmap for reform and the creation of a Mental Health Commission. There are new investments in youth mental health services and coordinated care for people with complex mental health needs.

Senator Penny Wright - World Mental Health Day can increase awareness and resilience

October 10th is World Mental Health Day and Greens spokesperson for Mental Health, Senator Penny Wright, is calling on Australians to think about the value of good mental health - today and every day. “Mental illness affects one in five Australians at any particular time - and that means ourselves, our families or our friends. Just like other illnesses, good treatment and care is pivotal in helping people to recognise what they're grappling with and getting the help they need”, Senator Wright said.

Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells - World Mental Health Day

Today is World Mental Health Day and Australians are encouraged to think of their mental health as an important element of their general health and wellbeing. Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Shadow Minister for Ageing and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, said it is important for people to consider how their lifestyle contributes to their overall wellbeing. “There are so many facets to our lives and on World Mental Health Day we should take some time to reflect on what is important to us,” Senator Fierravanti-Wells said. “Good health, family and friends, healthy work environments, a sense of belonging, a balanced diet and some exercise play an important part in keeping us healthy.

Mary Wooldridge - Minister Wooldridge launches Mental Health Week

Mental Health Week provides an opportunity to focus on how the community can be more inclusive of people with a mental illness, Mental Health Minister Mary Wooldridge said today. “This week we can all focus on helping to reduce the stigma surrounding



people with mental illness,” Ms Wooldridge said. “We can all help build better ways to include people with mental illness into our community.” The Victorian Coalition Government committed more than \$1 billion to mental health in the 2011-12 Budget and is currently reviewing the Mental Health Act.

Anna Bligh - Premier urges Queenslanders to change their minds about mental illness

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh called on Queenslanders to change their minds about mental illness and join her in pledging to end the stigma surrounding it. Speaking at the launch of the Appeal for Respect and Inclusion, the Premier said living with a mental illness presented many challenges. But one of the biggest challenges is the stigma that so often unfairly comes with it, the Premier said. “One in five Australians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, but around two thirds of these people will not seek help because of the stigma associated with it.”

Isobel Redmond - Let’s talk about mental health

Leader of the Opposition, Isobel Redmond, said yesterday marked the beginning of Mental Health Week in Australia, an annual event aiming to raise awareness of mental health issues and reduce the stigma and discrimination attached to mental illnesses. “For many years, mental health was a taboo subject in society. But considering that one in five people will suffer from a mental health illness in Australia in the next 12 months, it is important that mental health awareness, and an open discussion about it, continues. So let’s talk about mental health.”

Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia - World Mental Health Day - An opportunity to enhance mental health and wellbeing services

The Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia strongly urges improvements in access and capacity of mental health and wellbeing services. Supporting the World Mental Health Day 2011 theme of "the Great Push: Investing in Mental Health", ADCA Chief Executive Officer David Templeman, said today that it was equally important for adequate funding to be provided for the training of workers in the alcohol and other drugs and mental health areas to enhance their ability to adequately support clients who could have co-occurring mental health and/ or alcohol and other drugs issues.

AGPN - Mental health investment in primary health care reaps benefits

Australia’s Medicare Local led primary health care sector is set to deliver better models of care for people needing mental health services across the nation, Australian General Practice Network Chair, Dr Emil Djakic said. During Mental Health Week, AGPN is reminding communities across Australia that the future of mental health services is changing as Medicare Locals start to embed locally driven, evidence based services to improve the mental health and well being of people across Australia. “Depression and



anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health problems and are also among the most disabling in which people with mental health problems often struggle with living healthy, functional lives within their community or maintaining healthy relationships in the family setting,” Dr Djakic said.

Kon Vatskalis - Action urged on key issue

Territorians are being urged to help tackle mental health issues as part of Mental Health Week. The national week was launched with a function at Parliament House in Darwin yesterday. It aims to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of mental illness. NT Health Minister Kon Vatskalis admitted mental health needed to be better addressed.

Official Launch

World Mental Health Day Forum – 7 October 2011

National Press Club, Canberra.

The Great Push: Investing in Mental Health

Each year, the Mental Health Council of Australia hosts an official launch for World Mental Health Day at the National Press Club in Canberra. The luncheon and Forum is free. About 140 people attended, including representatives of major mental health organisations, government departments, consumers and carers, stakeholders and service providers.

Over the past two years, facilitator Sophie Scott (ABC TV medical reporter) has led a wide ranging discussion on service delivery and the policies covering mental health in Australia. This year, with the international theme for World Mental Health Day about about investing in mental health, the focus was on funding mental health in Australia.

Sophie was joined by a discussion panel – Professor Helen Christensen, Director of the Centre for Mental Health Research at the Australian National University; Keiran Booth, Carer Co-Chair of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum and Bronte O’Brien, Youth Ambassador.





The panel provided their perspectives on questions about where funding should go – Prevention? Research? Young people or across the whole of life? Acute care or community managed care? City or country? Or should we even be talking about either/or rather than looking at the ‘system’ as a whole and how to fund a mental health system that works?

Sophie sought questions from the audience following the panel discussion. Consumers, carers and stakeholders embraced this opportunity, sharing a wide range of comments and stories.

New MHCA logo

Mental Health
Council of Australia



The new Mental Health Council of Australia logo was unveiled at the National Press Club on 7 October 2011 as part of World Mental Health Day celebrations.

The logo was designed by a small Canberra firm called Voodoo Creative. They have recently done some very stylish work for us, including the *Mental Health, Discrimination and Insurance* report as well as recent National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum publications. The previous logo was not popular or even understood. Over the years, we’ve been asked many times about the ‘skier’ or what the ‘waves’ mean. On publications and when reduced, the old logo was difficult to read.



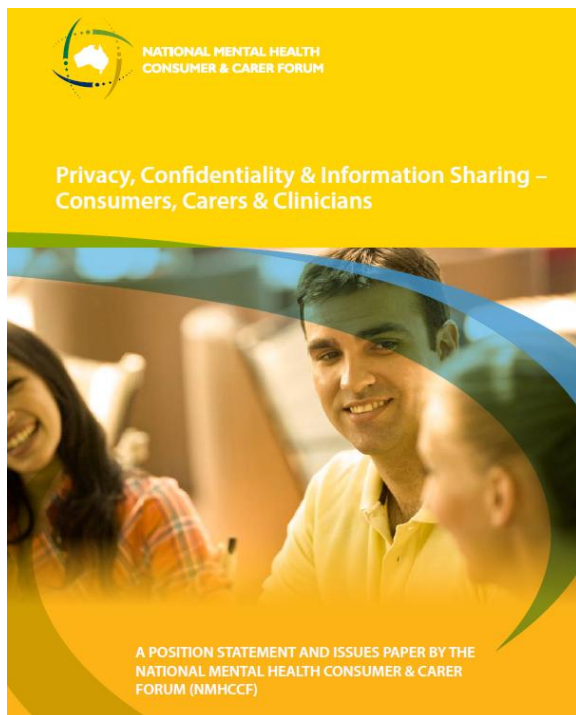
The Flannel Flower is often considered the symbol of mental health in Australia and we wanted to incorporate it into our new logo, while being mindful that some other organisations use a flannel flower (or something very similar) as part of their logo.

Working with the MHCA Board (especially Valerie Gerrand and Katie Spearritt), Voodoo created a logo that incorporates elements of the flannel flower, and is also simple, open, inclusive and easily reproducible.



Privacy, Confidentiality & Information Sharing – Consumers, Carers & Clinicians

By Kim Harris, Acting Executive Officer National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum (NMHCCF) & National Register



The NMHCCF has identified privacy and confidentiality as a matter of great concern for mental health consumers and carers.

In 2008 the NMHCCF conducted a survey entitled “Confidentiality and Information Sharing with Families and Carer in Mental Health”. Following from this, the NMHCCF commissioned an Issues Paper to further examine this topic and identify examples of best practice and potential solutions and ways forward.

The NMHCCF has since developed a Position Statement, *Privacy, Confidentiality & Information Sharing – Consumers, Carers & Clinicians*, to highlight the issues surrounding privacy and confidentiality in the Australian mental health system for consumers, carers and clinicians.



The Position Statement

- It is the position of the NMHCCF that:
 - the privacy of consumers is a basic human right
 - each consumer's right to privacy should be balanced with their nominated carers'
 - need to give and receive information relating to their caring role
 - nominated carers should be identified, supported and incorporated into service provision
 - nominated carers play a vital support role in a consumer's recovery and should
 - be included in information exchanges, where appropriate and with the consumer's consent
 - nominated carers' involvement should be regularly reviewed
 - consumer and carer participation is essential in developing best practice guidelines for information sharing.
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- The NMHCCF has identified the following strategies to improve privacy, confidentiality and information sharing processes:
 - open communication between consumers, carers and clinicians
 - clarify and disseminate privacy and confidentiality legislation and information sharing policies
 - review ethical codes of mental health professional bodies
 - develop practical guidelines on privacy, confidentiality and information sharing.

The Position Statement and Issues Paper should be read together for a comprehensive overview of privacy, confidentiality and information sharing in Australian mental health services.

The Position Statement and Issues Paper are available on the NMHCCF website - www.nmhccf.org.au

The launch

Senator Claire Moore (QLD) launched the Position Statement and Issues Paper at the TheMHS conference in Adelaide on Thursday 8 September 2011. This is the third NMHCCF position statement launched by Senator Moore, and her commitment to the mental health sector and to the NMHCCF is appreciated.





NMHCCF members Lyn English (SA), Isabell Collins (Vic), and Jenny Burger (Vic)

