NATIONAL REGISTER OF MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER AND CARER REPRESENTATIVES

The following people were the successful applicants for the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives.

National Register members participated in a two-day workshop in 2008, 2009 2010, 2011 and 2012 that provided training on advocacy skills, committee representation, leadership, policy development and communication skills. Ongoing training, support and mentoring will be provided and participants will be advised of opportunities, as they arise, to use their new skills as mental health consumer or carer representatives.

The National Register members are already involved in national and local policy initiatives. Individual members have supplied the following member profiles. The MHCA has not produced the following information and not does not endorse or guarantee the accuracy of the profiles provided.

For further information on the National Register please contact Kim Harris, Administration/Project Officer on (02) 6285 3100 or at kim.harris@mhca.org.au

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NATIONAL REGISTER MEMBER PROFILES

Julie Anderson VIC - Consumer
I currently hold the position of Consultant, Consumer Participation Services for Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria. Through my lived experience of mental illness, I have researched and worked within a team to develop a consumer peer education program, Well Ways MI Recovery, which has had seed funding to develop nationally. I have presented at National conferences in Australia and overseas.

I am currently studying a Masters in Social Science, Social Policy at RMIT. I consult on various National and State Government committees, and for the last 10 years have held the position as President of NEAMI a National Psychiatric Rehabilitation Service. The best part of my work is listening and talking to people about their stories within the mental health sector.

Susan Adam VIC - Carer
I have been lucky enough to be chosen again for the National Register after being one of the original members. I have volunteered and worked in the Mental Health field for over 8 years and have cared for three members of my family who were suffering from both mental and physical disorders.

I am presently working at Southern Health hospitals covering the whole Southern Metropolitan area and am the President of the Peninsula Carer
Council Inc. which I think has the largest membership of over 130 members in Australia.

I counteract my rather daunting workload with a love of painting, yoga, golf and gardening, and travelled to Ireland last year for the IIMHL conference which was a fantastic experience

Rick Jensen QLD – Consumer
I have been involved in the mental health arena for over 20 years. I have a lived experience of mental health and have worked in both the government and non government sector. I currently manage the Consumer, Carer and Family Team in the MHCOOD of Queensland Health.

I have a range of interests in mental health but in particular some of my areas of interest include consumer and carer workforce, recovery and social inclusion, consumer and Carer Leadership and consumer and carer representation. I look forward to working with you all in advancing and promoting consumer and carer participation.

I am currently the Carer Consultant in the SA Department of Health’s Mental Health Unit, and am committed to ensuring that the voices of Carers are heard and reflected - in policy and in practice - to ensure the best possible outcomes for consumers, their carers and families

Anne Barbara SA - Carer
I currently work .6 as a Carer Consultant within an acute Mental Health clinic in Adelaide, the prerequisite for this role is being a Carer of a person with a mental illness. I also work 1 day a week as a facilitator of ARAFMI (national - although we are not affiliated, support group for Carers of a person with a mental illness).

I have worked on an at needs basis as a facilitator of the well known Well Ways Program for the past five years and I represent Carers on the state Carer Advisory Group within the Department of Mental Health. Earlier this year I was involved in a project “The Bond We Share”, which produced a DVD and booklet on carers experiences when caring for someone with physical and mental health conditions. This resource will be used to provide firsthand knowledge to mental health professionals.

I was fortunate to attend the IILMH (International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership) exchange and conference in Ireland in May and I took the opportunity to visit other mental health services in Trieste (Italy), England & Scotland. I have presented papers twice at TheMHS, once in New Zealand and once in Sydney and am looking forward to being part of the National Register to further my knowledge and networking.

Hilary Barrows QLD – Carer
I have over 40 years experience as an inter-generational carer: began with my mother as a COPMI child, followed with continual care for my brother and completed this cycle with extensive care for my daughter. These combined
caring roles have given me experience across a range of mental health services including adolescent, adult and aged – within both the public and private spheres - dealing with issues such as dual diagnosis, suicidality and forensic orders. These experiences have been augmented by ten years of both volunteer and paid formal employment across government and non-government organisations and in a variety of states and jurisdictions.

**Stephanie Bassingthwaite ACT – Carer**

**Philip Bell ACT - Carer**
My wife Maureen and I have been mental health carers since diagnosis in 1994. We have been active members of the Canberra Mental Health Carers Network since it was set up in 1998, this is Canberra’s only organisation of mental health carers. My work experience has been in research, writing and editing, sales and marketing and in teaching computers.

I have been an active environmentalist for most of my adult life until interest in mental health took priority. I was a founding committee member of the Field Naturalists Association of Canberra; have been an active member of local computer groups for over 20 years; and in 2006 set up a U3A network to assist less experienced retired people with the internet and emerging communication technologies. I set up an online chat group for the local mental health carers network which has blossomed into around 70 conversation threads per month.

I was appointed by the then ACT Director of Mental Health as carer rep on the ACT Mental Health Risk Management Committee in April 2007. I was elected to the ACT Mental Health Strategic Executive and to the Collaborative Engagement Forum - which works on creating ways to smooth the passage of recovering consumers to find their feet back in the community following hospitalisation. I look forward to networking with other carers and consumers around Australia to see how we can pool ideas for better mental health.

**Judy Bentley ACT – Carer**
I have been actively involved and committed to the advancement of mental health issues since 2001 when a member of my family developed a severe mental illness. Since that time I have undertaken a number of mental health carer representational roles for Mental Health ACT, including membership of the inaugural ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Mental Health, and mental health representative on the Minister’s Health Council. I value highly the opportunity to have a direct voice to ACT Government on behalf of mental health consumers and carers.

Being able to share experiences and the support of other mental health consumers and carers has been something I welcome and appreciate and I am an active member of many ACT Mental Health networks. I was a founding executive member of the MH Community Coalition and the recently established carer representation and support program being facilitated by CarersACT. Other highlights for me have been working with Mental Health ACT to establish a new Mental Health Assessment Unit at the Canberra Hospital, membership of the developmental working group for
extensive new psychiatric facilities, and membership of the Beacon Demonstration Site working group which has led to a significant reduction in seclusion and restraint in psychiatric units.

My appointment as carer representative to the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum in 2005 has expanded my opportunities to represent mental health carers on a number of national committees where I have been able to utilise my previous experience of working in various Government departments, including Health and Ageing. I am looking forward to a further three year term as a member of the National Register and hope to use my experience to be able to support and mentor new members to the Register.

Ingrid Bentsen WA - Consumer
I have been a mental health advocate for approximately 18 years. Though I am a consumer I was for many years a carer too. I am passionate and committed to improving mental health services for all involved, consumers, carers and providers. I have been involved in a diverse range of projects and committee’s including; the development committee for a new Mental Health Unit, Governance, accommodation projects, Service reviews, as well as the coordinator for the C.A.G (approximately 15 years).

I established a support group in my local area 18 years ago and continue to facilitate meetings every month. I strongly believe in an holistic model of care and the belief that recovery is achievable. Human rights and reducing stigma are high on my agenda and I will take up these causes to the highest level.

Cassandra Bertram NSW - Consumer
I am 22 and have been a mental health consumer for the past 10 years. I have been a full time volunteer at Heal For Life Foundation for the past 3 years. I have participated as a guest and have trained in the Heal For Life’s model of recovery and now support other young women who are experiencing mental health problems and other effects of childhood abuse and trauma. I feel blessed to be able to walk alongside others who are taking their first steps on their healing journey. I love the work that I am doing and I am currently studying a certificate IV in Mental Health to further my training in this area.

I feel that it is such a gift for me to be able to use my own experience of having a mental illness to support my peers. I look forward to working with everyone on the national register and expanding my knowledge as well as sharing mine with others.

Evan Bichara VIC – Consumer
I have been a Nevil Management Committee Member since the beginning of 2010. My main occupational role is with the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit as a Culturally & Linguistically diverse (CALD) Mental Health Consumer Advocate. I have a leading role with the CALD Consumer Program throughout Victoria.
My field of expertise go beyond that in working for the Multicultural Mental Health of Australia as their prime Mental Health Consumer Spokesperson. Being on numerous Organisational Managerial Boards (VMIAC & ADEC), as well as on numerous national, state & local Advisory & Planning Committees (The National Multicultural Joint Officer’s Committee, the MI Fellowship (Victoria) CALD Oversight Committee, the RANZCP Psychiatrist’s College Professional Practice Committee & their Community Collaboration Committee, and has being part of the overhaul review process of the RANZCP College infrastructure in 2009).

My passion, enthusiasm & committed willingness to do his job well has made the impossible possible for me to career in this field with admirable performance. I have also undergone a minor Research Project on the Narratives of Consumers who have being piloted with the Strength’s Model of Case Management at the ST Vincent’s Mental Health Service.

I also run successfully two Mental Health Consumer Groups. A Mutual Support Group known as the “Spectrum of Cultures” for ethnic/or migrant Mental Health Consumers. And since the beginning of 2010 commenced running an Advocacy Group known as the “CALD Consumer Reference Group” (CRG) comprised of consumer advocates who are talented to advocate for those people who may not be ready to doing so.

I have also done a lot of Public Speaking at Conferences & Forums, Private & Public schools, and various Social, Church & Sporting groups of our Community.

I hold a Victorian Certificate IV in Disability Work and have completed a segment of the Bachelor of Science degree at Melbourne University. I enjoy working outside the domain of Mental Health and have been a Soccer Coach and later a Soccer Referee for Soccer Australia. Evan has also had numerous occupations in the past within the Building, Retail, Accounting, Funeral and Fashion Industries. I believe that out of all my past jobs nothing has been as rewarding, sustainable and worthwhile as my Consumer Advocate position.

**Barbara Biggs VIC - Consumer**

I have firsthand lived experienced with interfamilial suicide, also child sexual abuse and its long term consequences on mental health and emotional well-being. I am regularly invited to speak at conferences and am enrolled in a PhD program in the Social Work Department of University of Western Australia.

I am the author of five books, four of which incorporate the themes of child abuse. My current project is co-authoring a book about the treatment of child sex offenders and their families with a psychologist specialising in their treatment for the past 20 years.

Barbara works in Indigenous communities with her Aboriginal psychologist husband to up skill local people in dealing with a variety of trauma issues.
**Patricia Blair QLD - Consumer**
I have been a mental health consumer for 38 years. I was fortunate to be able to continue my nursing career and raise three wonderful children over that time. I now work as a Consumer Consultant at a major Queensland Hospital.

The work is challenging but very rewarding and I feel blessed to be able to use my mental health experience to support my peers. I work with several NGO’S and one of my passions is Peer Support. I also love the Art's and use creativity for my own healing journey as well as for my peers.

**Michael Burge QLD – Consumer**
I am very passionate about and committed to improving the quality of life for consumers and carers and I feel both honoured and privileged to be part of this initiative.

In the course of my work over the past fourteen years as a Consumer Advocate, Voluntary Veterans’ Affairs Pensions & Welfare Officer, Mental Health First Aid Trainer, and various Consumer and Carer representative roles at both National and State levels – I have had the privilege to meet with many people who have been touched by mental health problems.

**Louise Byrne QLD - Consumer**
I have worked in a variety of lived experience roles in government and non-government mental health services and tertiary institutions over the past six years. I am currently employed as a consumer academic by CQUUniversity. I am also a PhD candidate at CQU.

The focus of my doctoral work is on the inclusion of lived experience practitioners (consumer/peer roles) within mental health services and education institutions. With a particular emphasis on stigma and ways we can work towards more ‘friendly’ and accepting workplace culture.

I have trained in Intentional Peer Support (IPS) and am firmly grounded in the IPS concepts of mutuality, learning together, achieving difference and hopefulness.

I believe we are going to see radical, positive change to the mental health system in this country over the next decade and am passionately committed to playing a part in that process.

**Helen Charlesworth WA - Carer**
I am a carer for my adult son who suffers from a major mental illness. This is my second term on the National Register. I live in WA and am very involved in mental health reform. I trained as a carer representative in 2003 and since then have worked on committees under the WA Mental Health Strategy 2004-07, the Mental Health Co-ordinating Group 2008-09 and the Project Steering Committee that put together the WA Mental Health Plan 2010-20. I have been a guest speaker on many occasions at Forums, Symposiums and Rotary and Zonta meetings. I have been on the Management Committee of our local Mental Health Service since 2004 and I am Vice Chair of Carers WA.
Currently I am on a committee for the Implementation of Standards into WA Mental Health Services following on from my membership of the national committee for the Recommendation of the Implementation of these Standards into Office Based Services. I am always keen to hear from members of the Register as it gives us a good national perspective of new directions in mental health and overcomes the isolation that we often experience over here.

Jackie Crowe VIC – Carer
I am Jackie Crowe. I am a carer who works with a rural Mental Health Service in Victoria as a Carer Consultant.

A key interest for me is ensuring that Family/Carer perspectives critically informs and enhances decision-making in service provision, policy, and evaluation at local, state and national levels.

I believe strongly that there is much to be gained by consumers and their families/carers, mental health professionals and governments exploring new ways of communicating, sharing visions, developing strategies, building quality services and keeping processes under ongoing review through creativity and innovation that includes consumer and family/carer participation and partnerships.

Karene Eggleton NSW – Carer
As a carer of an adolescent with high need mental health issues, I am a passionate advocate for positive changes to the mental health sector to ensure a high standard of care is available to consumers. I am the Founder and President of a charitable organisation (Metta Generation) with the primary objective of raising funds for youth with high need mental health issues. I have extensively lobbied local, state and federal government in regard to our personal plight and the need for change. I have also undertaken numerous initiatives to raise public awareness and understanding via various media outlets

On a professional level, I hold a Diploma in Community Services, along with an Advanced Diploma in Accounting. I have worked as a drug and alcohol counsellor, a Lifeline counsellor, and currently work as an Accountant within a not-for-profit indigenous health organisation. I also sit on the Board of Directors as Vice President for a local domestic violence service.

I believe I can benefit other mental health consumers and carers offering a perspective from rural, adolescent, and high need mental health issues, all of which I believe are under-represented as the current model focuses on early intervention for those with mild to moderate mental health issues.

Vrinda Edan VIC - Consumer
Director, Consumer & Carer Relations for Southern Health Mental Health Program.
I have a health professional background and been involved in the mental health consumer movement for over 13 years, contributing to number of initiatives including consumer perspective research and education, CoPMI & family inclusion. I am passionate about helping Mental Health Workers to understand the impact that service use has on the person, particularly in providing opportunities for the clinician to hear about the consumer experience in person.

I am also interested in the further development of theory around Critical Consumer Perspectives and in particular how this perspective can be utilized in the education of health professionals, its impact on their practice and ultimately the consumer’s experiences. Recently my work has included improving the sectors understanding of the impact of the Vic Charter on Human rights and how they interface with Mental Health laws and the use and adoption of the social model of disability to mental health.

Fred Ford VIC – Carer
Fourteen years ago I held many of the then common stigmatising beliefs around mental illness. After a family member took an overdose, I began a long, and at times, perilous journey through the mental health system as a carer of a person who experiences a mental illness.

I have always held a belief that if there is a problem then you try to become part of the solution rather than the problem.

I have volunteered as a facilitator for the Well Ways Carer education package with MIF Vic, also the chairperson of the Consumer and Carer Council with, the then, Wodonga Regional Mental Health Service, (now Health Albury/Wodonga), for 5 years.

After completing a Diploma in Community Welfare Work in 2007, I took on the role of Family/Carer Support worker with Albury Mental Health and am now also a trainer with Mental Health Coordinating Council (Mental Health Connect).

I have a history of advocating for better support for carers culminating in becoming a member of the Mental Health Council of Australia’s Consumer and Carer National Register travelling to Canada in 2007 as a part of a delegation of Consumers and Carers to the International Initiative Mental Health Leadership Exchange. I have also sat on a number of national committees including the working group on the 4th National Mental Health Plan.

Tony Gee VIC - Carer
Is a Psychologist who has worked for many years as a counsellor/mediator with the Family Court and Relationships Australia. I completed a Masters in Suicidology in 2008
I am also a bereaved parent, losing my youngest daughter to suicide in 2005. I currently work in private practice as well as on a sessional basis with Relationships Australia, Legal Aid and the Federal Magistrates Courts.

In 2006, I helped establish the Life Is...Foundation and coordinate the development of small, innovative programs to assist people deal with issues around self harm and suicide. I am also involved with The Compassionate Friends (Victoria), as a participant, Board member and facilitator of a group for bereaved fathers.

Kerry Geraghty QLD - Carer
I have been a member of the National Register since its inception in 2007/08 and been fortunate enough to attend the national workshop each year since then. I had previously trained as a teacher and am the mother of 4 daughters.

It was the illness of one of my daughters in 1997 that led me to become more actively involved in consumer participation within the mental health system. I learnt very quickly there are ways to work with families that are better than others. I valued highly the clinicians who worked professionally and empathetically with our family and who empowered us to cope with the challenges our whole family faced.

These days I work as a Consumer/Carer Consultant for Mater Child and Youth Mental Health Service. In my role I try very hard to promote the value of working in partnership with consumers and carers and to share the consumer/carer perspective in all aspects of service delivery. I enjoy helping consumers/carers to find their voice. I also currently sit on the Queensland State-wide Child and Youth Mental Health Network as a carer representative and endeavour to improve awareness of the difficulties many families face when using the mental health system.

Some highlights of my work include:
- Providing quality information for families
- Chairing the Mater CYMHS Parent Advisory Group which has been successfully running for 13 years
- Being part of the orientation program for new staff and speaking to them about the importance of consumer/carer participation
- Co author of 3 articles on consumer/carer participation

Carli Gettingby WA - Consumer
I have been the Program Secretary at GROW (WA) for over 3 years and am the first point of contact for the organisation. My role is to provide Secretarial and Program support for the WA Branch of GROW and the Branch Manager; and to assist in providing a welcoming and nurturing environment at the GROW Centre. As GROW employs staff who have come through the GROW Program themselves, I provide valuable assistance and support to them in a mutual help environment.

I have also improved my knowledge and understanding of the mental health sector by studying a Certificate IV in Mental Health.
I am keen to share my experience of mental illness and recovery through representing diverse views of consumers on a national level. As a consumer I have recovered from depression through the psychiatric support, medication and cognitive behavioural therapy and continue to receive support as an outpatient. I understand the difficulties in coping with stigma and maintaining relationships and employment when you are unwell.

Elaine Goddard NSW - Carer
I am a Mother Carer and Advocate for my 25 year old son who was diagnosed with Schizophrenia at the age of 17 following 4 years of significant mental ill health.

I trained as a psychiatric nurse over 30 years ago and have worked in both the mental health and aged care system since then currently as a Business Development Manager.

I have many interests and various qualifications including Natural therapies, Reflexology and Aromatherapy.

I am a carer representative with Remind which is the training arm for the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW and have been involved in the Mental Health Intervention training for the NSW Police over the past 2 years. I participated in the ‘SBS ‘Insight program’ on Mental health issues and I am a strong advocate for people who live with mental ill health.

Patrick Hardwick WA – Carer
I became a carer for my wife in 1996. I also became aware of many gaps in support for carers and joined the Board of Management of ARAFMI Mental Health Carers and Friends Association (WA) in 1999 and was President for 5 years. I have an interest in enhancing promotion of services available for carers and advocating their rights and needs. I want to see a cultural change where all staff in Mental Health Services take a more family centred approach to treatment and support and that carers are automatically involved in planning and decision making.

I have been a past President of Mental Health Carers ARAFMI Australia and a past Board Member of the Mental Health Council of Australia. I was also an inaugural member of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum and in recent times I have rejoined the NMHCCF representing the Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network Australia where I am the State Coordinator for Western Australia and a member of the national committee.

I have represented mental health carers at numerous committees and forums at both a state and national level over many years.

Lucy Henry TAS - Consumer
I have been working and volunteering as a mental health consumer representative and public speaker since 2006, at both a state and national level. I was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder in 1996, and am
passionate about persuading the mental health system to look for creative solutions rather than consigning women with borderline personality disorder to the too hard basket.

After years of unsuccessful both outpatient and inpatient treatment with a wide range of psychotropic medications, I have achieved a much better quality of life and level of functioning through the help of a mental health assistance dog and a community choir for the disadvantaged. I am currently studying a graduate diploma in Journalism, Media and Communications at the University of Tasmania, and am a consumer representative on the board of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania.

**Maria Katsonis VIC - Consumer**
I am the Principal Adviser, Public Administration in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. I have held a range of senior roles in the Victorian Public Service including Assistant Director, Social Policy in Premier and Cabinet. I experienced a severe episode of clinical depression in 2008 that required hospitalisation. My recovery is ongoing. I have written two articles about my experience of depression and recovery that were published in The Age newspaper in 2009.

I am a member of blueVoices, beyondblue’s consumer and carer reference group and the co-founder of Open Minds, a peer directed group for mental health consumers and carers in the Victorian Public Service.

I have a Master of Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and am a Fellow of Leadership Victoria

**James Kelso VIC - Consumer**
I work as the Consumer Consultant at ARAFEMI Victoria. ARAFEMI is a Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Service in Melbourne. I have been working there since 2006, and formerly I was working at Inner West Area Mental Health Service as Consumer Consultant.

The last few years have been busy as I have been studying for a Diploma of Community Development and a Certificate IV in Mental Health. In my work I try to inform people of how we can work towards a better service, and work with staff and managers to ensure this is done. I uphold the values of hope and recovery in my work, and endeavour to show that given the right inputs, these are realistic goals. I also encourage social and community engagement, and a focus on achieving happiness rather than dwelling on past or unhelpful memories.

**Margaret Lewry QLD - Carer**
I am a divorced mother of four adult children.

I sit on the Register primarily as a Carer, although I currently wear the hats of both Carer and Consumer. I have been a carer since about the age of three, caring for both my parents, and as I grew older, two of my five younger
siblings.

When I married, I became the carer of a foster son with dual diagnosis issues, and eventually two of my own four children required specialised care from me due to their own mental health diagnoses.

I have been involved within the mental health field as a Carer for over 10 years now, particularly on committees, doing advisory work, and giving speeches.

**Karen McCann QLD - Carer**

My three children all attended Queensland Child and Youth Mental Health Services from 1989-2004. They are now adults and I am still a carer for one son. Over those years I was able to have a voice by telling my story to clinicians at staff training, giving conference presentations, and eventually worked within a CYMHS as a Consumer/Carer Consultant from 2002-2009. In this role I worked closely with parents and carers and have a strong understanding of their needs and concerns when their child or young person is experiencing, diagnosed or admitted to an inpatient unit with a mental health issue.

I now work as a Senior Project Officer within Qld Health and have regular contact with approximately 52 consumer and carer workers from across Queensland. I am very passionate about consumer, carer and family participation within mental health services as well as promoting the development of the consumer and carer workforce, at the district, state and national levels. I have been a foundation member of the National Register and pleased to have the opportunity to continue working with and learning from other members.

**Eileen McDonald NSW – Carer**

Carer for over 35 years for family members with mental health illnesses and other disabilities including acquired brain injury, autism and learning disabilities. I currently care for two family members.

NSW Carer Representative of the National Mental Health Carer & Consumer Forum (NMHCCF), Carers NSW Board of Directors, beyondblue volunteer, as well as carer representation on various state and national committees and expert reference groups. Provides curriculum development, mentoring and professional development training for medical & allied health workers, NGO’s and peer workforce.

Part time lecturer Dance Movement Therapy in Graduate School of Counseling. International speaker, facilitator & trainer. Key passions: justice, human rights, advocacy, carers, young carers, children & youth with special needs, refugees & socially disadvantaged.

**Janne McMahon OAM SA - Consumer**

I have worked within the mental health area as a consumer advocate since 1997. I founded the Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network.
Australia) which is now a recognised peak Australian organisation advocating in a variety of forums for the issues and needs of mental health consumers and carers.

I have appeared before six parliamentary inquiries, I am currently and have been a member of a number of Australian Government Committees as well as a number of national mental health Expert Reference Groups and Advisory Panels. I have previously been a member of the Board of the Mental Health Council of Australia for the three year period 2000-2003 and also member of the RANZCP Board of Professional and Community Relations.

I am currently a Director of the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council, a member of the RANZCP Board of Practice and Partnerships, a consumer surveyor with the Australian Council on Health Care Standards and a member of the recently formed South Australian Health Practitioners Tribunal. In 2008 I was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of my advocacy work.

**Julia McMillan SA - Carer**
I have a Bachelor of Psychology from the University of South Australia. I have over fifteen years experience in the NGO sector in the field of mental health, homelessness and disabilities.

I am currently the Carer Consultant in the SA Department of Health's Mental Health Unit, and am committed to ensuring that the voices of Carers are heard and reflected - in policy and in practice - to ensure the best possible outcomes for consumers, their carers and families.

**Noel Muller QLD - Consumer**
I have been an active executive member of a number of local, state and national organisations that have a focus on health, mental health and well-being, for eleven years. I have represented these groups and the community across a wide and diverse range of health and well-being matters. I have a passion for consumer rights, and equity, in particular in the provision of health and community services for all, and a firm belief the community must be involved in all of the decision process.

The majority of my working life has been as a manufacturing jeweller; this included over twelve years as owner/manager of a large regional manufacturing workshop, which was wholesale and retail, and had clients across regional Queensland and Northern New South Wales. I have lived in Bundaberg for over thirty years and have two (dazzling) daughters both in their twenties. I have a deep commitment to my community, although I find that over time, ‘my community’ has extended to a National dimension.

**Lei Ning VIC - Consumer**
Deputy Director of the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council and manages the Consumer Research and Evaluation Unit. As an active consumer representative, I sit on a number of national and state mental health committees and boards.
I have worked as a professional artist for more than 15 years, have a master’s degree in art therapy, and am interested in the relationship between creativity and mental health.

Heather Nowak SA – Consumer
I have lived in Mt Gambier in the State’s South East for the past 16 years. Having been a consumer of mental health services during the past 25 years, I have experienced many of the difficulties faced by consumers residing in both metropolitan and regional areas.

I hold a passion for using my lived experience to ensure that the future consumer journey is made as smooth as possible to enable optimal recovery outcomes. I am currently employed as a Peer Specialist with Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia. I am also a consumer representative on the Statewide Mental Health Clinical Networks, Social Inclusion Consumer Advisory Group and nationally on the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration, ATAPS Expert Advisory Group; FaHCSIA Targeted Community Care programs evaluation Committee and am a member of Blue Voices and an Ambassador for Beyond Blue.

Kali Paxinos VIC - Carer
I have been caring for my son since 1985. He has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. As a carer counsellor at the Schizophrenia Fellowship I worked with family/carers from varied backgrounds and cultures as well as contributing to focus groups and committees. For two years I was involved in outreach work helping Greek families understand mental illness. For many years I have spoken to university students, clinicians and business groups about the carer experience and have been involved in education programs for carers. In June 2010 I presented a paper at the Diversity in Health Conference.

Developing a carer consultant pilot program in Victoria led me to be appointed in that position at the North West Area Mental Health Service. The Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit (VTPU) and Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA) have appointed me as their carer representative and recently I have been accepted by the Community Collaboration Committee of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrist as a carer advocate.

Lynette Pearce TAS - Carer
I have been involved in mental health systemic advocacy and representative work for the past ten years. Initially this involvement came through membership on the Tasmania’s Independent Ministerial Advisory Committee, TASCAG. I then undertook the role of Chairman for TASCAG for about six years. During this time I was involved in the development and review of several mental health projects and services across Tasmania and I facilitated, on behalf of Mental Health Services, consumer and family/carer participation in Tasmania’s public mental health services.

In 2007 I was selected as one of five mental health carer representatives to participate in the National Mental Health Leadership and Mentoring Program.
and exchange in USA and Canada. I have been a member of the National Register since its inception in 2007 and been involved in a number of national committees and projects.

Currently I am employed by Statewide and Mental Health Services, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services as the Senior Consumer and Carer Liaison Consultant. I live in Launceston, and in collaboration with my state office colleagues have statewide responsibility to ensure consumer and carer participation is progressed within Government services. I have, and continue to provide support to family and friends with mental illness and have a lived experience of it myself, having experienced depression following a work related injury during my nursing career in 1991.

**Yvonne Quadros VIC - Carer**

I have been caring for my adult son who has an acute mental illness for the past 19 years. In 1999 we moved from Melbourne to Coffs Harbour and due to the minimal/ lack of Mental Health services available in this region, I decided to become involved in local community initiatives. Through area health I did a course in Health Advocacy in 2002.

In 2005 I was selected to go on the panel of the North Coast Area Mental Health forum and was a member for 5 years. I have a good understanding of The Mental Health Act NSW 2007 and other relevant legislation regarding carers issues.

I am the coordinator and the founding member of the Coffs Harbour Mental Health Carers Support Group (6 years). I also work with NGO's to seek respite, education and other services to help carers.

I am a carer representative with the Division of GP's, the local hospital Mental Health Participation networks and Carer’s NSW. I have been a guest speaker at Professional development training for medical & allied health workers.

Being able to share my experiences and to support mental health consumers and carers has been the driving force in working in this sector. I was an Ambassador for the Black Dog Institute (3 years). I have been a guest speaker at Rotary, Lifeline and other local public forums.

In my capacity as an Official Visitor in NSW I advocate for the rights and dignity of people being treated under the NSW Mental Health Act 2007.

I was awarded the Inaugural Local NSW Carer award for 2010 and a commendation Certificate from MHA for Mental Health Matters – Innovative Mental Health Initiatives.

**Leonie Ramsay WA – Consumer**

I have been involved in systemic advocacy in mental health for ten years in Western Australia. Over this time I have formed a good understanding of reform needed in mental health across the age and diagnostic spectrum. State committee’s I have served on have been primarily involved in areas of
supported accommodation, medical research and disability employment. The most recent committee I served on in 2009-2010 was the WA Mental Health Division Project Steering Committee tasked with drafting the WA Mental Health Strategy and Plan 2010-2020.

This PSC position consulted the community and helped form the Draft WA Mental Health Strategy and Plan 2010-2020 due for release shortly. Whilst this committee sat we also had the releases of the Federal National Health and Hospital Reform Report, WA Economic Audit Committee Report Putting the Public First, WA Auditor General’s Report Adult Community Mental Health Teams and WA Department of Housing’s Housing 2020 Report.

I believe I am well placed to have an impact in future mental health reform and I remain determined to represent consumers and support carers in WA to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness across our State and in Australia.

**Ailsa Rayner QLD - Consumer**

After fifteen years in the human services industry and two in the non-government sector as a professional with a degree in Psychology I came out as a Consumer to take up the role of Consumer Consultant for the Cairns and Hinterland Mental Health Service with Queensland Health. I have been in this role for 18 months and am only now finding my feet, so to speak.

Recently I have gained a position on a national Stigma Reduction Project and look forward to gaining and giving feedback to disseminate to my large network of Consumers and Carers in our well established area. It is with great interest and enthusiasm that I approach my role on the National Register and in the Queensland Voice to advance Consumer, Carer and Families issues within and without the Service.

**Cindi Rees NSW - Consumer**

I have worked in the Community Services industry for over 20 years in both paid and voluntary positions. I have a Diploma in Welfare and have completed the NSW Health Advocacy and Mental Health Advocacy courses.

I am currently employed by New Horizons in a PHaMS program as Community Support Worker and have previously worked at Mission Australia in a HASI program and at Hastings Womens and Childrens Refuge. I have also volunteered at Hastings Family Support Services, the Youth Refuge, and Dementia Day Care Centre.

I have been a casual TAFE teacher for five years and was also employed as the Consumer Consultant at Kempsey Mental Health Services for nearly three years. Having been a consumer,

I have a strong commitment to Recovery Orientation and have been instrumental in making this a focus of NCAHS Mental Health service delivery.

As an ACHS Surveyor I travel all over Australia assessing health services, and have recently been appointed to the Mid North Coast Local Health
Network Governing Council. I sit on committees in the local area, as well as being the NGO representative on the NSW Mental Health Program Council Consumer Sub-committee and have been on a judging panel for the NSW Health Awards for six years.

I enjoy public speaking and have presented papers at local, state and national conferences.

Alexandra Rivers NSW - Carer
I am a psychologist, ex-teacher, and ex-academic. A child of a person with a severe mental illness, I have been a carer for 20 years of a son with a severe mental illness. I am vice president of the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW, and a Board member of the Schizophrenia Research Institute of NSW, and of the Aboriginal Education Council of NSW. I have also been a member of the Guardianship Tribunal of NSW, and a member of the Governing Committee of the Consumers’ Health Forum.

I am a committed advocate for mental health carers and consumers, and am especially interested in the needs of those people with severely disabling and persistent mental illness, including theoretical models and research, causes, interventions, treatment options and associated general health issues, services, housing, human rights, community education, stigma effects, cognitive capacity issues, and the intersection of mental illness with the legal and justice systems.

Louise Salmon NSW - Carer
I am a member of the Children of Parents with a Mental Illness organisation’s consumer and carer Family Forum. I have a long term interest in consumer feedback in the shaping of mental health services.

I am a social worker by profession, with qualifications in law. I have worked for 20 years in the fields of child and family community health, parent education and family law. I strive to help raise awareness towards destigmatisation and understanding of the issues of mental health, especially those facing children and their parents.

I was awarded a BSW with Honours (UNSW) in 1982 and a Rotary Foundation Professional Scholarship to North America in 1990. I have presented at numerous national and international conferences and published Consumer Evaluation of a Counselling Service: Chatswood Child and Family Health Service, 1991.

I engage in professional education to enhance my understanding and contribution to the needs and experience of childhood; most recently The Anna Freud Centre London (2010) AAIMH Conference Perth (2011).

Gail Sant SA - Carer
My role is the Family and Carer Consultant for Mind in South Australia. This role was developed to work specifically on addressing the needs of carers in
our organisation - to ensure carers have a voice. I assist in providing orientation and training for all staff around family and carer inclusion. I began my own caring role in 1972 when my former husband first became ill, and was diagnosed with schizophrenia, both my children were also diagnosed with a mental illness, my son with schizophrenia and daughter with bipolar. Both my children now have a good quality of life and live in the community quite successfully. I have experienced the impact of many changes in medication, in care and treatment and I have experienced firsthand the impact of stigma surrounding mental illness on individuals and families.

Carers are often left out of planning and progress reports of their loved ones. Through my own personal understanding, study and knowledge, I feel able to share and support other carers of people with a mental illness.

Within my current role as Family and Carer Project Officer with Mind, I have developed good carer representation on our Family and Carer Reference Group – Terms of Reference have been developed. The Strategic Plan is very inclusive of all family members, we have a Family & Carer Inclusion Policy in place and the Mind Family and Carer Support Group is up and running successfully.

**Thelma Smalley VIC - Carer**

I am very excited about the opportunity given to me to participate in the MHCA National Register. As a carer, I have also been an active member of bluevoices with Beyond Blue since 2006.

I have represented carers on a number of forums and whilst there has been great inroads into addressing the needs of consumers and carers there is still much to be done.

My interests encompass a range of different areas. One of these is carers’ being allowed and encouraged to participate in treatment plans for the consumers they care for (without breaching their privacy or wishes). Other areas include policy making and service provision.

If we can bring about positive change in these areas I believe it will flow on to produce better outcomes for consumers.

**Arahni Sont NSW – Carer**

I hold a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Sydney, an MBA from the AGSM (University of NSW), and a Graduate Diploma from the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In a career spanning 25 years and five countries, I have consulted in the fields of foreign investment promotion, banking, privatisation, stockbroking and since 2006 in fundraising.

My last project was as Resource Development and Marketing Manager for Habitat for Humanity Australia and prior to this I advised the Institute for Neuromuscular Research at Westmead for two years. I have been a board Director of the Holdsworth Community Centre and Services since July 2004.
The Centre provides essential aged and disability programs in five LGA's in south-east Sydney, with an annual budget of $3 million.

I have been a sole parent of a son for the past 10 years (now 20) who has an intellectual disability and autism. I have acquired a deep understanding of the needs of carers and people with intellectual disabilities. My son was recently hospitalised for 6 months after a psychotic episode and is still recovering. I joined the national register in order to contribute to improving outcomes for those with co-morbidity (mental illness and a disability).

**Helen Staples QLD - Carer**
I am currently a carer representative on the Heads Up Community Partnership on the Gold Coast and i have been a carer representative on the Qld Govt Learning Material Mental Health Advisory Group.

I am passionate about helping bring about change so that people with mental illness (especially psychosis) can quickly and easily get appropriate help when they are medically relapsing and so that carers are taken notice of when they are desperately trying to get help for their loved ones. I see the need for a systematic process to ensure that consumers, their significant others and the mental health providers have the same written information about a consumers early warning signs of mental health relapse to ensure that prompt and effective help is provided to assist recovery. I also want good forms/systems for carer’s collateral and medical record “must knows.”

I have extensive experience working full time in higher education, the health system (private practice, and some time working in public and private hospitals) and coaching. I have professional qualifications in science, health and more, including a BSc, PhD: Biochemistry, Grad Dip Nut Diet, Diploma Company Directors, Cert IVs in Life Coaching, Small Business and Workplace Assessment and Training.

**Joanne Switserloot VIC - Consumer**
2011 marks 10 years since my foray into the mental health system following a major mental breakdown which nearly took my life. Discovering that the help I needed was not forthcoming, activism fuelled by what I believe is a healthy anger became a major factor in my recovery journey. This anger, along with validation and friendship from fellow consumers became my saving grace.

Having a history of childhood sexual abuse, one of my coping strategies was to be a quiet little mouse in an effort to hide and not be seen. This strategy however erupted into a volcanic expression of suppressed accumulated mental anguish following a major life trigger event as an adult in 2001. My ensuing behaviours resulted with a mental health label which initially made me want to disappear even more. I eventually discovered though that to recover I needed to speak up… to speak up for the little girl in me who needed acknowledgment and for others.

My current role is as a consumer consultant with Forensicare. I also sit on a number of other mental health committees and am a community visitor with
the Office of the Public Advocate. I have a Certificate in Applied Aspects of Loss and Grief, Diploma in Community Services (Community Development) and participated in community and consumer leadership programs at local council and state government levels. In 2009 I was the first consumer participant of the Australian Mental Health Leadership program run by the Centre for International Mental Health at Melbourne University; other participants comprised psychiatrists and clinical managers. However it is the lived experience of mental illness that has been the most profound education I have experienced.

That quiet little mouse is pinching herself to be part of this national register with humbleness for the experiences each of us has gone through to have the opportunity of putting ourselves ‘out there’ to represent mental health consumers and carers at a national level.

Āine Tierney ACT – Carer
I have been active in the mental health sector since 1999 and have a personal experience of mental illness as both a Carer and Consumer. I joined the ACT Transcultural MH Network in late 2003 where I have been a dedicated member of the management committee and extremely active in lobbying for funding and promoting issues around CALD mental health both locally and nationally.

In September 2010, as part of the work of the ACT Transcultural MH Network, Āine established a radio show ‘Transforming Perceptions’ to promote local ACT services and to increase mental health literacy and knowledge in diverse cultural communities in the ACT and region. The show is aimed at presenting a range of different viewpoints on subjects that may have direct or indirect links to social, emotional and mental well-being towards promoting de-stigmatisation of mental illness.

I intend to continue to work in partnership with other sector members locally and nationally to identify new and innovative ways to meet the needs of Consumers, Carers and their families and in particular to increase CALD mental health Consumer and Carer representation.

Larisa Trotter VIC - Consumer
I have experience as a consumer in both the adolescent and adult psychiatric wards of the private system in Victoria, as well as various day programs a well. My shift into consumer representation began at Mind Australia, whose program, Denham House I lived at for 2 years. I have been a member of their Consumer Reference Group for almost 3 years. As part of the CRG I've participated and run focus groups, attended training and strategic planning meetings, and meet with the CRG on a monthly basis.

I have also been involved with Our Consumer Place, sitting on discussion panels and appearing as a guest speaker at La Trobe University. I am passionate about consumer-led services and consumers choosing their own path of recovery. Of particular interest to me are peer support programs, NGOs and where they fit within the wider scope of mental health services,
and independent consumer advocacy and representation.

I have a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Professional and Creative Writing, but intend to continue my studies geared towards support work and/or counselling. I also volunteer at the Heal For Life Foundation, supporting young women at their Eva House Program who are survivors of child abuse and trauma.

**Vittoria Tonin VIC - Consumer**

**Emma Willoughby SA – Carer**
I am the Consumer Consultant at the Mental Health Unit (MHU) in SA Health, the role of this position is to ensure that consumer perspectives are heard at all levels of mental health strategic planning, policy and service decision making in SA.

I am passionate about consumer participation in mental health and building a community that is mentally healthy, inclusive and free of stigma and discrimination. I have been involved in consumer participation and education since 1999 and has skills and experience in psycho-social rehabilitation, systemic advocacy, education and training, community development and social work, as well as her lived experience of mental illness and as a carer for a parent with a mental illness and physical disability. Previous to my current position I held roles as the Mental Health Project Officer at the Health Consumers Alliance (the peak body for consumers in South Australia) and as a Consumer Consultant for the Community Mental Health Teams at UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide.

I have also worked as a drama teacher and fish monger! I have a degree in social work and have just completed a graduate certificate in Health Promotion at Flinders University.

**Lily Wu NSW – Consumer**
I migrated to Australia from China 20 years ago. I have lived with Mental Illness since I was 18 years old with the support of my family, friends and psychiatrists as well as the benefit of the medication. I have successfully completed my University Education. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with a Major in English in China. I have been employed as an Assistant Lecturer in a Financial Institute for four years before I came to Australia.

My qualification was recognised by Australian AEI-NOOSR International Qualification Unit as an Australian Bachelor Degree in Literature. I have achieved meaningful and satisfied recovery life style in our community since then.

I have worked in a number of Government, Non Government Mental Health Services for the past nine years. I am a consumer representative on number of National, State, Area and Local Committees. I have enhanced my knowledge and skills to represent consumer issues including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse consumer points of view since being selected as a
member of the National Register Program. I am looking forward to further developing and enhancing my knowledge and skills for Mental Health Consumers with all of your support.