



Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia)

engage, empower, enable choice in private mental health

Communiqué No 7: 28 & 29 September, 2015

The purpose of this brief Communiqué is to keep our members informed about the main discussions, deliberations and activities after each of our two face to face meeting of the National Committee. We hope that it give you some indication of our meeting discussions. We would be pleased to receive any comments you may wish to make about any of these issues at admin@pmhccn.com.au

The Network held its **thirty second meeting** on the **28 & 29 September, 2015** in Melbourne. Major items of discussion were:

Governance of the Network beyond 30 June, 2016

Considerable time was spent discussing and reviewing the governance of the Network. As you may be aware the Australian Medical Association has very kindly auspiced the Network since 2004. This has placed significant risk on the AMA as the Network continues to grow and our activities broaden. We are very grateful to the AMA for their continual support particularly in order for us to operate. Watch this space as more is determined!

Emerging issues for private sector consumers and carers

We invited Dr Bill Pring (Senior Psychiatrist and AMA representative to the Private Mental Health Alliance) to present on some issues which may inevitably affect mental health consumers and carers. Dr Pring covered the National Mental Health Commission's Report to Government, patients' experiences of care, rural settings, telehealth, issues for people accessing intensive psychotherapy, and off label prescribing.

Watch our website www.pmhccn.com.au for more details from our minutes of this discussion.

Health Fund Policies – issues

There was a lot of discussion about some of the issues which have been identified around information for consumers about health fund policy restrictions, the huge number of policies being offered, the work of the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman, etc. Please note that the Government website <http://www.privatehealth.gov.au/> provides very good information about health fund policies and we would recommend people access this site.

Survey of Members.

We wish to thank all our members for completing the survey in which we sought information about privately insured consumers admitted to public hospitals under their private health insurance status. A brief summary of responses has been provided by *Professor Sharon Lawn* (our SA Coordinator) and made available to the Mental Health Committee of the Private Healthcare Australia (health funds), the Australian Private Hospitals Association, Psychiatry Committee (private hospitals) and to the Australian Medical Association's Private Psychiatrist Committee (private psychiatrists).

Resources for online use.

We discussed the best way to promote the existence of the Network's online training resources.

Please be aware these are free, and can be down loaded as a DVD and accompanying PDF from our website at www.pmhccn.com.au go to **Resources**, then **Training Resources** tab. These 5 areas are:

- **Looking after yourself**
- **Briefing and debriefing**
- **Self-evaluation and self-reflection**
- **Staying motivated**
- **Advocacy and the Organisation**

We believe very strongly that these resources will be most useful to ANY consumer and/or carer representative in any organisation, be it public, private or the community managed sector. So if you or your organisation have consumers and carers involved in representational activities, please ensure they are referred to and are provided with these resources.

A Practical Guide for working with carers of people with a mental illness Project.

Our national Carer Project developing a: 'practice Guide for Working with Carers of People with a Mental Illness' is progressing well. You will recall that funding was received from Helping Minds WA and MIND Australia to undertake this 12 month national project in conjunction with our Network and Mental Health Australia. The national consultations have concluded and the draft Guide is being developed by the Project Officer, Judy Hardy.

Standing Items

A number of standing items featured throughout the two days were around Risk Management, Budgets, State Advisory Forum reports, National Mental Health Consumer Carer Forum, National Consumer Carer Register, the Network Executives' Reports and the Network Work Plan 2015-2018.

Just remember: After the National Committee has endorsed the Minutes of this meeting in a few weeks, they will be posted onto our website of www.pmhccn.com.au where you can read the full content of the two days.