

Consumer and Carer Liaison



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

FAMILY / CARER REPRESENTATIVE

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum

Mental Health Services is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from family members or people who provide ongoing support and care to those experiencing mental illness to represent Tasmania on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF).

The NMHCCF was established by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) in 2002 in recognition of the continued need for mental health consumer and carer involvement at the highest level of policy development. It provides a mechanism for mental health consumers and carers to come together to foster partnerships and to ensure the input of consumers and carers into the activities of the mental health sector, including the reform of mental health policy and service delivery in Australia.

NMHCCF Terms of Reference

Forum activities are guided by the Terms of Reference, agreed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC), which are to:

- enhance, promote and progress genuine national partnerships and the recognition of mental health consumers and carers at all levels of government and community
- provide ways to improve access to and sharing of relevant information between national networks and organisations
- strengthen and develop the mental health consumer and carer focus of entities at the national, state and local levels
- increase meaningful opportunities for and capacity of mental health consumers and carers to advocate for and participate in legislation, and policy development, implementation and evaluation at all levels
- provide an informed strong and unified voice on consumer and carer issues to government, the mental health sector and other stakeholders
- identify best practice, protect human rights, highlight deficiencies and influence positive systemic change for the recognition and benefits of consumer and carer participation at all levels

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- develop and agree to national principles and priorities of action and strategies aligned with the National Mental Health Plan 2003-2008.

What does the position entail?

Selected representatives appointed by Mental Health Services (Tasmania) are expected to undertake the following key tasks:

- represent Tasmanian family members / carers at the NMHCCF
- articulate family / carer perspectives using system advocacy skills in a national policy development context
- maintain connections with and be actively involved in the key networks of family / carer representatives in Tasmania
- provide a conduit for information between the NMHCCF and relevant Tasmanian carer state based networks including but not limited to using NMHCCF identified reporting processes
- maintain regular liaison with and reporting to, Tasmanian Mental Health Services NMHCCF contact officer (Senior Consumer & Carer Liaison Consultant)
- fulfil duties of NMHCCF members as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the NMHCCF and the NMHCCF Operating Guidelines (or other representative forum).

What level of commitment is required?

Representatives will be expected to attend two face to face meetings per year. These meetings are usually held interstate.

Representatives will also be expected to participate in two teleconferences throughout the year with the NMHCCF.

At times representatives are invited to participate on sub committees and/or working parties of the NMHCCF. Involvement in these additional committees will require a commitment to attend additional face to face meetings or teleconferences.

Representatives are expected to consult broadly through existing family/carer networks in Tasmania to ensure a broad range of views and experiences are heard at a national level.

Representatives are required to regularly report back to the Tasmanian family / carer sector and to Mental Health Services, through the Senior Consumer and Carer Liaison Consultant.

State representatives are appointed for a maximum term of four years, with review of positions at least every two years.

How are costs covered for involvement on the NMHCCF?

All expenses relating to representation on the NMHCCF, including airfares, accommodation, meals, additional travel costs such as taxis are covered through the financial commitment made by each state and

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territory to the NMHCCF on an annual basis. All travel and accommodation is organised by the Executive Officer of the NMHCCF. Sitting fees are paid to state representatives on the NMHCCF.

How do I submit an Expression of Interest?

If you are interested in submitting an EOI to be considered for appointment by Mental Health Services, Tasmania as the carer representative please provide an account of how you are able to fulfil the following criteria as set down by the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum.

- Demonstrated ability to provide a carer perspective at a system advocacy level. For example, skills could include:
 - An understanding of the principles of consumer and carer participation;
 - Being widely informed of and able to represent a carer experience beyond one's own personal experience;
 - Familiarity or the ability to gain familiarity with state or territory and national policy issues in mental health;
 - Being able to provide advice and strategic direction to the NMHCCF on behalf of Tasmanian carers;
 - Being able to problem solve, use initiative and contribute to the goals of the NMHCCF.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain networks with state or territory-based carer mental health organisations or government bodies and their constituents;
- Well developed interpersonal skills including the ability to work as part of a team and also maintain good working relationships with NMHCCF members and other stakeholders in the mental health policy development process e.g. government, service providers;
- Well developed communication skills including listening, providing feedback, negotiation, conflict resolution and the demonstrated ability to use these to achieve results;
- Willingness to participate in training relevant to the work of the NMHCCF (this training would not be onerous and would be provided through the NMHCCF);
- An understanding of the diversity of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our community, and the impact this has on consumers and their families' experiences of mental illness.

A letter of support should be provided by a relevant consumer or carer organisations outlining what makes them suitable for this position.

How are representatives selected?

After you have completed and submitted your EOI a panel will review and consider it and invite you to attend an interview with the panel to discuss your EOI and how you might best represent out state at a national level.

The selection panel will be chaired by Mental Health Service's Senior Consumer and Carer Liaison Consultant. Other members of the selection panel will be the Mental Health Council of Tasmania Representative, TASCAG (Independent Ministerial Advisory Committee on Mental Health) Representative and a Carer/Family Representative.

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What do I need to do now?

Complete your EOI by addressing the selection criteria as outlined in this document and send to:

Lynette Pearce
Senior Consumer and Carer Liaison Consultant
Mental Health Services
PO Box 708
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Email: lynette.pearce@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Closing date for submission of expressions of interest is: **Monday 16 March 2009**

The next face to face meeting of the NMHCCF will be held on 26 & 27 March 2009.

What do I do if I have questions?

If you have any questions in relation to the position of Carer/Family Representative on the NMHCCF or if you have any queries in relation to completing the EOI please contact Lynette Pearce on 6336 4387 or email lynette.pearce@dhhs.tas.gov.au