



Annual report 2009 - 2010

NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc
(NSW CAG)

Representing mental health consumers to all levels of the NSW Government.



“NSW CAG: Bridging the gap between mental health consumers and the NSW Government”

NSW CAG FUNDED BY NSW DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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ABOUT NSW CAG

Vision

Our vision is for all mental health consumers to experience fair access to quality services which reflect their needs.

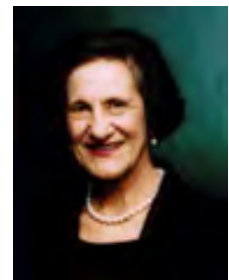
Mission

Our mission is to ensure that mental health consumer views are heard by policy makers, service providers and the community, through promoting consumer participation in relevant policy making and service development decisions. The values behind our work are:

- **Inclusiveness:** Valuing and respecting difference without judgement;
- **Justice and Equity:** Promoting the rights and dignity of consumers in an equitable way to reduce discrimination and stigma;
- **Integrity:** A strong ethical base, accountable and legitimate in representing the views of consumers;
- **Openness:** Being open, transparent and responsive to the needs and views of consumers;
- **Collaboration:** Working in effective partnerships to achieve common goals;
- **Innovation:** Valuing new, effective ways to proactively influence.

NSW CAG's Patron

NSW CAG is grateful for the support of our patron, Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO, who shares our vision of fair access to quality services which reflect the needs of mental consumers.



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Key Areas of Work

1. Advising Government

NSW CAG provides feedback to the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Department of Health and other relevant government and state agencies as they develop policy that relates to consumers.

2. Listening to consumers

NSW CAG seeks the views of consumers in NSW on issues relating to the mental health system using various means, including: face-to-face consultation forums across the state in each Area Health Service, quarterly newsletters, weekly E-News, calls for contributions through Network NSW, and via the newly established website forum.

3. Leading the debate

NSW CAG seeks to take a proactive approach to identifying issues of importance to consumers in relation to state policy and service development and promoting debate and awareness of these issues between all stakeholders.

NSW CAG holds and promotes conferences, seminars and forums of interest to consumers that provide information and facilitate discussion about mental health issues.

4. Promoting participation

NSW CAG encourages a strong understanding and enactment of consumer participation at all levels in mental health service planning, provision and evaluation, and policy development by all stakeholders.

- NSW CAG has representatives who sit on various State and Federal committees. This ensures that the views of mental health consumers in NSW are heard.
- NSW CAG develops and works on projects that relate to consumer participation in the mental health sector.



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5. Informing effectively

NSW CAG provides information to consumers, service providers, carers and others via mail, E-mail, and our website. This includes our quarterly newsletter, [NSW CAG INFO LINK](#) and our weekly E-news, which provide information about best practice in consumer participation, mental health service provision and systemic issues, as well as promote opportunities to participate. People can receive this information by joining [Network NSW](#). People can also ask for information to be distributed and can contribute to the newsletter.

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Throughout the 2009-2010 financial year, NSW CAG has continued to make solid progress towards our Strategic Plan 2008-2010. With only six months remaining of the strategic plan, it is incredible to see all the achievements we have made. While many of these achievements are reflected within the remainder of the report, I would like to highlight some of these:

Strengthening the organisation

- We have increased our core funding through until 2012 and are therefore able to increase our staff capacity to lead and undertake our systemic advocacy work
- The changes to our constitution which enable Membership to the organisation have resulted in 105 people becoming Members of NSW CAG. Seventy Five of these people are consumers, which provides another mechanism for ensuring consumer input into the governance of NSW CAG
- We have increased our project basis and the funding for projects

Extending the scope and reach of our activities

- In the past 12 months we have conducted a record number of consultations around the state, resulting in us speaking with over 220 consumers face to face. This has been supplemented by our interactive website forum and the “Your Voice through NSW CAG” which is an email consultation with our network. This consultation work is key to our representation work, as we can only facilitate the voice of consumers if we have heard the views of consumers.
- We have commenced three major projects which promote consumer participation in the mental health system and improve the system for consumers:
 - Consumer Workers’ Forum Project in collaboration with the Consumer Workers’ Forum
 - MH-CoPES Stage 3 in collaboration with NSW Health
 - Development of the Recovery Oriented Service Self Assessment Toolkit for community managed (non-government) mental health organisations in collaboration with the Mental Health Coordinating Council

Increasing our profile and influence over issues

- In the past 12 months we have made a record number of submissions to state and national policy, strategy and legislation development that ensures consumer input into key state and national policies



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- We held the first Recovery Forum which saw consumers, carers, service providers from the public and community managed sectors and NSW Health staff come together to discuss how to progress the realisation of recovery oriented services in NSW
- We have commenced putting our comments out to the general public through the media in order to influence policy relating to issues of importance to consumers

In the next six months, we will be developing in collaboration with our Members a new strategic plan that will set a vision for the work of NSW CAG for the next five years.

I would like to thank the Board for their work and support over the past year. I would like to thank and acknowledge the contribution Warren Heggarty who retired during the financial year, and to welcome our new Board members, Paula Hanlon, Tim Heffernan, and Des Idiens.

I would also like to thank the staff for their continued dedication and commitment to NSW CAG. The Board and staff of NSW CAG look forward to continuing to work to lead us towards our vision, for all mental health consumers to experience fair access to quality services which meet their needs.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has participated in NSW CAG's events and consultations and provided input into our work.

Allison Kokany

Chair



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EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The 2009-2010 financial year has been one of continued growth and development for NSW CAG. Our increase in core and project funding has enabled us to build a strong, diverse team of staff, and to expand the consultative and representative work we do. It has been incredibly exciting to see the organisation grow to a size of 16 staff within the office, supported by four casual staff.

This expansion has enabled us to take strident steps forward in solidifying our role as the peak body representing mental health consumers, facilitating the voice of consumers within the system, and progressing genuine consumer participation within the mental health system.

This year we have conducted a record number of consultations with a record number of people compared to other years. We have visited every Area Health Service, and managed to visit towns we have not been to before or recently. This means that we have had a stronger picture of the mental health system around the state from the perspective of the people who use the services, as well as an understanding of the gaps in the system and the needs of consumers. This consultative work is essential for us to be able to be truly representative of consumers throughout the state. It has informed our representation at forums, conferences, workshops, Senate Inquiries, committees, and to policy and strategy developments and other inquiries. It also informed our media releases and policy positions. Through the combination of a strong consultative base and our representation work, we have been able to facilitate the voice of consumers at both state and national levels, and influence the direction of policies, legislation, strategies and the overall mental health system.

This past year has also been an exciting time where we have been able to influence the system and to enhance consumer participation in NSW. In collaboration with the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Health, we have established the Consumer Sub-Committee to the Mental Health Program Council. This committee ensures for the first time in NSW, consumer involvement at the highest level of decision making within the public mental health system and in the governance of this system. We commenced the MH-CoPES Stage 3 Project, which is assisting Area Health Services in preparing to implement the MH-CoPES Framework for consumer participation in service evaluation and quality improvement. We have also commenced the Consumer Worker's Forum Project, which will develop a framework for the consumer workforce in public mental health services in NSW. These projects further embed genuine consumer participation within the mental health system in NSW. We also held a Forum to examine how we can progress a truly recovery oriented approach to mental health services in NSW, and worked with the Mental Health Coordinating Council to develop the Recovery Oriented Service Self



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Assessment Toolkit, a tool which helps community managed (non government) mental health organisations to deliver recovery oriented services. This continues our work to move the system to being truly recovery oriented.

In looking back over the past year, I would like to thank everyone who has participated in the work of NSW CAG, contributing your views through a variety of ways. I would also like to thank every member of the NSW CAG staff; your hard work, dedication, commitment and passion have been vital to the work of the organisation over the year.

As we look forward to the New Year, the National Health and Hospitals Reform will present a new challenge for the mental health system that NSW CAG will need to be active in lobbying around. We will be working to ensure that any changes to the system do not reduce access to mental health services, and to ensure the continued growing focus on community rather than hospital services. Ideally we want to see any reform to the health system result in better services and better access for mental health consumers; however to achieve this in the current political and social climate will require considerable advocacy. The staff look forward to continuing to lobby to work towards a system that provides quality services which reflect the needs of mental health consumers in NSW.

Karen Oakley
Executive Officer



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PEOPLE BEHIND NSW CAG

NSW CAG Board

December 2009 to June 2010

Chair	Alison Kokany
Secretary and Public Officer	Richard Saliba
Board Member	Jenny Mackellin
Board Member	Anne Francis
Board Member	Warren Heggarty (to March 2010)
Board Member	Linda Hennessy
Casual Board Member	Tim Heffernan (from February 2010)
Casual Board	Paula Hanlon (from February 2010)

July 2009 to December 2009

Chair	Allison Kokany
Deputy Chair	Marilyn Dibbs
Secretary and Public Officer	Richard Saliba
Board Member	Jenny Mackellin
Board Member	Anne Francis
Board Member	Linda Hennessy



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NSW CAG Staff

Executive Officer

Karen Oakley

Policy Team:

Senior Policy Officer

Rebecca Doyle

Policy Officer

Lauren Whibley

Policy Officer

Bridgette Skehan

Policy and Participation Officer

Magi Rai

Policy Assistant

Jamie McDonald (to May 2010)

Administration Team:

Senior Program Officer

Paul Langdon

Executive Support Officer

Cecilia Rais

Administration Officer

Maureen O'Keeffe

MH-CoPES Project Team:

MH-CoPES Project Manager

Louisa Riste

MH-CoPES Project Officer

Amy Fitzell

MH-CoPES Administration Officer

Kamani Thanakrishnan

Area Liaison Officer

Leon Fernandes

Area Liaison Officer

Danielle Perkes

Area Liaison Officer

Theresa Caruana

Consumer Workers' Forum (CWF) Project Team:

CWF Project Officer

Moniquea Spiteri (from November 2009 to April 2010)

CWF Project Officer

Jamie McDonald (from May 2010)



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Casual NSW CAG Staff:

Committee Representative	Susan Palmer
Committee Representative	Katrina Stewart
Committee Representative	Liz Moore
Committee Representative	Lily Wu
Committee Representative/ Participation Officer	Narelle Heywood
Committee Representative/ Participation Officer	Rosemary Bourne
Executive and Policy Advisor	Gillian Malins



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NSW CAG'S PROJECTS



Mental Health Consumer Perceptions and Experiences of Services (MH-CoPES) Project

The Mental Health Consumer Perceptions and Experiences of Services (MH-CoPES) Project, has been conducted by NSW CAG in partnership with the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office (MHDAO), NSW Health.

Stage 2

Stage 2 of the MH-CoPES Project successfully finalised the MH-CoPES Framework and associated MH-CoPES Questionnaires to facilitate a way for people who use adult public mental health services to provide feedback about their experiences and for this to inform service improvements.

This financial year saw the completion of the final Stage 2 report and the evaluation of the Stage 2 Project.

Stage 3

The MH-CoPES Stage 3 Project commenced at the beginning of this financial year. The aim of Stage 3 of the MH-CoPES Project was to prepare NSW ready to implement the MH-CoPES Framework, as finalised at the end of Stage 2. Within this financial year, a team of 6 were recruited, including a Project Manager, Project Officer, Administrator, and 3 Area Liaison Officers.

A number of the project objectives have been achieved in this financial year. Extensive mapping of each Area Mental Health Service (AMHS) has been completed to enable the development of tailored implementation plans for each Area Mental Health Services (AMHS). A 5 year statewide implementation plan with identified strategies for sustainability of MH-CoPES across NSW has also been drafted. A detailed cost analysis was conducted with each AMHS to inform implementation funding bids and development has begun on key resources to accompany the implementation plan. A series of consultations, including an online survey were carried out to inform the development and continued review of the key resources, which include support and promotional materials and a set of guidelines.

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Promotion of the MH-CoPES Framework and the MH-CoPES Stage 3 Project achievements has occurred through regular project newsletters and updates in NSW CAG's weekly E-News and Quarterly Info_Link Newsletter. Articles have also appeared in the newsletters of ARAFMI, MHA and MHCC's FYI E-Fax and under the recommended reading section of TheMHS Book of Proceedings 2009.

Conference Presentations have been made to TheMHS 2009, the Consumer Centred Health Care Conference 2010 and the Looking Forward Looking Back Forum. Presentations on Stages 2 and 3 of the Project have also been provided to senior management, executive and AMHS Directors in all eight geographic Area Health Services, in addition to the Consumer Workers' Forum Annual meeting and the PECC (Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre) Network.

To further endorse consumer participation in the evaluation of mental health services a draft policy position and draft directive for endorsement by the Mental Health Program Council have been presented to NSW Health for final feedback and consideration.

Over the next financial year AMHS implementation plans will be presented for approval to their respective AMHS executive. A focus on training within AMHS networks, services and teams will commence and training resources currently in development will be finalised and distributed across AMHS. Additional promotion of MH-CoPES will take place, through regular newsletters and articles submitted to publications including Australasian Psychiatry as well as presentations at conferences where an abstract is accepted.

This project is funded by an NGO Grant from NSW Health.



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Consumer Sub-Committee to the Mental Health Program Council

The Consumer Sub-Committee of the Mental Health Program Council was established in July 2009 by the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Health in collaboration with the NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. (NSW CAG). The Committee was established to ensure consumer participation in the governance of mental health services in NSW through the provision of advice to the NSW Health Mental Health Program Council and its sub-committees.

The NSW Mental Health Program Council is the peak governance body reporting to the Director, Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Programs. It provides advice and makes recommendations on the full range of finance, activity and management issues of the mental health program in NSW.

The Sub-Committee reviews and provides advice in relation to the issues concerning mental health consumers in NSW and consumer perspectives on proposed policies, guidelines and the governance of mental health services in NSW. The Committee met five times during this financial year.

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The Recovery Project – The Mental Health Coordinating Council in Partnership with NSW CAG

The NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc. (NSW CAG) and the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) have initiated and conducted a joint project to identify and develop a resource to support mental health community managed organisations (also known as non-government organisations, or NGOs) to achieve and support recovery oriented services in practice.

While national and state policies reflect a commitment to recovery oriented service provision, there remains a gap in understanding what recovery oriented service provision is comprised of, and how it can be fully realised in service delivery.

The project commenced in January 2009. A Reference Group was established to provide advice and input into the project, comprising consumer, carer, service provider and academic representation.

The project had four key stages.

1. A literature review around recovery and recovery oriented service provision;
2. Stakeholder consultations with consumers, carers and service providers from community managed mental health services;
3. The key outcome from the project is the Recovery Oriented Service Self Assessment Toolkit, or “The ROSSAT”. The ROSSAT includes:
 - A guide for implementing ROSSAT;
 - A tool for organisations to complete; and
 - A tool for individual workers to complete.
4. Identifying where the ROSSAT crosses over with the revised National Standards for Mental Health Services.

The ROSSAT provides a mechanism for organisations and individual mental health workers to assess and identify opportunities for improving recovery orientation. It presents tools which are underpinned by concepts of continuous quality improvement and consumer and carer participation in service delivery.

A final project report, including the ROSSAT is available from NSW CAG’s website www.nswcag.org.au.



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This project was funded through the Infrastructure Grant Program (IGP). IGP funding is provided by the NSW Health Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office and administered by MHCC.

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The Consumer Workers' Forum Project

The Consumer Workers' Forum (CWF) Project Stage 2 is being conducted by NSW CAG in collaboration with the CWF Organising Committee. The project is funded by NSW Health through the Sydney West Area Health Service. Stage 2 of the Project aims to develop a statewide framework for the consumer workforce in public mental health services, that will be endorsed by the NSW Health Mental Health Program Council.

This financial year has seen the Project Officer conduct a review of the work conducted during the first stage of the Project, and develop a brief survey to gauge an understanding of the sector's view on the purpose of the mental health consumer workforce in NSW.

A literature review was also conducted and a paper detailing the findings of the review has been drafted. The literature review will help provide stakeholders with a broad overview of the mental health consumer workforce in NSW, Australia and internationally. The review provides a general overview of the history of the consumer workforce, the barriers and challenges facing the workforce, as well as the perceived benefits of consumer employment in mental health services. The review provides direction for the project and consultations, and will help generate discussion. The review will be finalised and published early in the next financial year.

During the financial year consultations have also been conducted with approximately 30 consumer workers from all Area Health Services (AHS) which have these positions, as well as Area Executive and other staff in each of the eight AHSs. The first round of consultations have focused on the roles, functions, responsibilities and titles for consumer workers.

These consultations have provided an opportunity to promote the project, listen to what stakeholders' needs are of the framework that is to be developed for the consumer workforce in NSW and gather information relevant to other aspects of the project.



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Anti-Stigma and Discrimination Campaign

NSW CAG continued with its campaign to raise awareness about the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental illness and to lobby for a state program to increase knowledge about mental illness and to address this stigma and discrimination. As part of this work, we hosted a free public screening of our DVD “It’s only 1/100th of me – Stories of 6 people challenging stigma and discrimination surrounding mental illness” at the Chauvel Cinema, Paddington Town Hall during Mental Health Week 2009.

During the evening, one of the people on the DVD, Fay Jackson, Director of Vision in Mind, spoke about her experiences of stigma and discrimination. We also had a performance by the the Sydney Street Choir, whose members are homeless or disadvantaged men and women. The mission of the Choir is to connect with, inspire and empower those living and working in homeless or disadvantaged communities through creating music, performance and passionate expression that truly opens people’s hearts.

The evening provided an opportunity for people to see and hear first-hand accounts which demonstrate how stigma and discrimination is experienced and how people with mental illness have lives and identities outside their illness.

The DVD remains popular with now over 567 DVDs distributed to individuals and organisations throughout NSW, Australia and internationally. Each of the stories is also available at

http://www.nswcag.org.au/page/challenging_stigma_discrimination.html#dvd.



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NGO Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Research Project: What Works?

Throughout the financial year, work continued on the “What Works?” Project, a collaboration between the Mental Health Association NSW (MHA), Mental Health Carers, ARAFMI (Association for the Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill) NSW, the University of Western Sydney and NSW CAG to conduct research around cannabis use in young people who identify as having a mental illness.

The Project sought to understand what aspects of health promotion campaigns motivate young people with a mental illness who use cannabis to cease or reduce use in order to inform the development of future campaigns. It asked the question “What Works?” in health promotion strategies to reduce cannabis use in young people who have a mental illness and who regularly use cannabis.

The Project involved focus groups with young people aged between 18 to 30 years old who had a mental illness and either had never used cannabis, were currently using cannabis, or who had used cannabis in the past and ceased use. A literature review was undertaken to inform the project and to develop the focus group questions. Ten focus groups were then conducted involving 35 people. During the focus groups, the following topics were discussed:

- present levels of knowledge, perceptions and behaviour regarding cannabis use
- reasons for cannabis use where mental health problems were already experienced
- what maintains use of cannabis
- what has prompted or might prompt cessation of cannabis use
- suggestions for a health promotion campaign targeting young people with mental illness which aims to inform about the potentially problematic relationship between cannabis use and mental health
- comment on a poster produced by the Australian Government as part of its National Drugs Campaign.

The information gathered through the focus groups was grouped into themes to understand “What Works”. The outcomes of the project were written up and published in the report “What Works? Report into cannabis use by young adults living with a mental illness” that is available at www.nswcag.org.au/page/what_works.html.

This project was funded through a grant administered by the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC).



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NSW CAG'S EVENTS

Recovery Forum 2009

On 10 December 2009 NSW CAG hosted a Recovery Forum, focusing on how to progress recovery oriented service provision in NSW. The forum was attended by 120 stakeholders in mental health, including consumers, carers, service providers, clinicians, academics, researchers and representatives from NSW Health, including the Director of Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Office. Helen Glover, a consultant and trainer in recovery-based practice, who also has the lived experience of mental illness, facilitated the day.

Participants had the opportunity to contribute to a set of key questions on recovery and how services in NSW can be transformed to be truly recovery oriented.

It was a very successful day with a lot of shared enthusiasm, commitment and passion by everyone who attended. A wealth of information was collected which was then analysed resulting in the identification of core concepts relating to recovery and recovery oriented service provision. A key message that arose was the importance of services providing a suitable environment for consumers to work on their recovery.

There was also a component of the forum which fostered thinking about how we as individuals and organisations can work towards achieving a shared vision for recovery oriented service provision.

There is footage available on NSW CAG's website of the interview that started the Recovery Forum between Karen Oakley, NSW CAG's Executive Officer, and Helen Glover. Outcomes from NSW CAG's Recovery Forum 2009 will be released early in the next financial year.



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NSW CAG'S SUBMISSIONS, ADVICE AND CONSULTATIONS

Submissions:

- Australian Senate Community Affairs Inquiry into Suicide in Australia
- Draft National Mental Health Standards Recovery Principles
- Draft Standard 10.1 – Supporting Recovery – Revised National Mental Health Standards
- Inquiry into the Operation of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993
- National Mental Health Workforce Strategy and Plan
- NGO Shadow Report – Convention on the Rights of Person's with Disabilities Workbook
- Review of the Guidebook on the Mental Health Act 2007
- Revised State Plan Final Consultation Draft
- Second Draft of the Fourth National Mental Health Plan
- Witness presentation to the Australian Senate Community Affairs Inquiry into Suicide in Australia

Advice Provided:

- Case Management Discussion Paper being developed by the Chronic and Continuing Care Recovery and Rehabilitation Working Group, NSW Health
- Consumer Sub-Committee to the Mental Health Program Council's response to the Draft NSW Forensic Mental Health Strategic Framework
- Exposure Draft of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009
- Mental Health Priority Taskforce's response to the Draft NSW Health Clinician and Community Engagement Policy
- Mental Health Priority Taskforce's response to the Proposal for NSW Kids
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum position statement on Seclusion and Restraint
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum position statement on Supporting and Developing the Consumer and Carer Identified Workforce – A Strategic Approach to Recovery



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- NCOSS's response to the NSW Liberal/National Social Policy Framework – 'Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer'
- NSW CAG's position on Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) to MHCC
- NSW Health Department's Health Disability Action Plan 2009-2014
- NSW Health's Guidelines and Policy on the Clinical Practice of ECT
- NSW Health's Suicide Prevention Strategy early draft
- Suicide Prevention Australia Draft Position Statement – Supporting Suicide Attempt Survivors in the Community
- Wagga Wagga Richmond Fellowship's Consumer Planning Day Steering Committee

All submissions and advice were informed by our information base gathered throughout this year and recent years

Consultations:

- Gosford (8/7/2009)
- Parramatta (15/7/2009)
- Buckingham House, Surry Hills (17/7/2009)
- Croydon (4/8/2009)
- Blacktown (10/9/09)
- Dubbo (17/9/09)
- Parramatta (17/9/09)
- Nowra (21/9/09)
- Gosford (23/9/2009)*
- Liverpool (29/9/09)
- Kempsey (8/10/2009)
- Pioneer Clubhouse, Balgowlah (13/10/2009)
- Waga Waga (14/10/2009)
- Parramatta (15/10/2009)
- Orange (26/10/2009)
- Buckingham House, Surry Hills (29/10/2009)
- Cornucopia Café, Gladesville (24/2/2010)
- Cornucopia Café, Gladesville (5/3/2010)
- Cornucopia Café, Gladesville (11/3/2010)
- Cornucopia Café, Gladesville (12/3/2010)
- Turrumurra (20/4/2010)
- Forensic consumers at Morriset regarding the NSW Law Reform Inquiry and issues for forensic consumers (16/6/2010)
- St Vincent's Hospital regarding the NSW Law Reform Inquiry (23/6/10)

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- Email consultation through our Network NSW (with a readership of approximately 700 people) around “The Draft Recovery Standard for the revised National Standards for Mental Health Services”
- Email consultation through our Network NSW around the needs of people with comorbid mental illness and drug and alcohol problems
- Email consultation through our Network NSW around Recovery Oriented Service Provision

A total of 222 people attended NSW CAG’s consultations. This was an increase of 64 people from the last financial year who were consulted face to face. Participants were mainly consumers, with carers, students, mental health workers and service providers also attending. These consultations provided key input to NSW CAG’s lobbying and planned submissions.



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NSW CAG'S NETWORKS – INFORMING AND SEEKING INPUT

Network NSW is NSW CAG's email and mail database. At the end of the 2009-2010 financial year, the number of people who were registered on Network NSW was 1,104. This was an increase of 162 people, or 17.19% over the year. 248 people have indicated they are consumers, 43 are carers. Also, 5 report being from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and 101 from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. 137 organisations are registered with Network NSW.

We use three main ways to stay in touch with NSW CAG's network, Network NSW:

- Our newsletter – [NSW CAG INFO_LINK](#)
- The NSW CAG website/online forum
- E-mail updates – E-News
- Annual Communications Survey

These methods of communication help NSW CAG keep consumers in NSW up-to-date with information about what is happening in NSW in relation to the mental health system.

Newsletter: [NSW CAG INFO_LINK](#)

A broad range of information has been published in the four editions of Info_Link during this financial year 2009-2010. The newsletter has been distributed by mail to approximately 450 people in NSW in addition to a further 654 (approximately) via E-News. Some of the key topics were:

- Summaries of submissions presented to Government Departments
- NSW CAG's partnership with the Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Office (MHDAO) in establishing the Consumer Sub-Committee to Program Council
- NSW CAG's project updates –
 - MH-CoPES Stage 3
 - NSW Consumer Workers' Forum Project
 - Recovery Project in partnership with MHCC
- Mental Health Policy in Australia – an overview

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- NSW CAG's Recovery Forum
- Media release: People with mental illness impacted – NSW Government Revises State Plan
- NSW CAG's Focus for Advocacy 2010
- Article: "The Rudd Government proposes to takeover hospital funding"
- NSW CAG's presentation at the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Inquiry into Suicide
- The Transfer of Magistrate Hearings to the Mental Health Review Tribunal
- COAG Reforms – The National Health and Hospital Reform Agreement

Website and Online Forum

The website aims to create greater awareness about the role of NSW CAG and to provide an opportunity for consumers to have their voices heard about their thoughts and experiences with the mental health system. The website has online resources such as: online surveys, links to other organisations, information about NSW CAG's work, information on the state and national mental health system, information about advocacy and participation and an online forum. This forum provides consumers and others with the opportunity to engage in mediated discussions about systemic issues related to mental health. It provides one mechanism for consumers to participate in the work of NSW CAG and contribute ideas to our systemic advocacy. When NSW CAG needs to consult around an issue, often an additional thread is added to the website forum to enable consumers to provide input. At the end of 2009-2010, 67 people had registered as users of the forum

The website is updated on a regular basis, and also lists opportunities for participation across the mental health sector in NSW, and advertises positions within NSW CAG when they become available.

All of NSW CAG's policy positions, media releases and submissions that are able to be made public are published on the website. There is also a section on the website that informs of what is happening in mental health at a state and national level. Our website address is www.nswcag.org.au.

E-News

The weekly E-News contains information about NSW CAG's work and new additions to the website. It also provides information about upcoming events



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being coordinated by both NSW CAG and other bodies to facilitate awareness and participation.

Your Voice through NSW CAG

NSW CAG also conducts consultations with Network NSW via email or through online surveys available through our website. Calls for contributions or input are sent on particular topics to those on our email list.

NSW CAG's Annual Survey

In order for NSW CAG to be transparent and reviewable by our constituency, we conduct an annual survey that is distributed to people on NSW CAG's Network NSW. This year, both a paper based survey was distributed with the final newsletter of the year, as well as an electronic version that was advertised through E-News and available through the website. Thirty seven people completed the survey.



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NSW CAG'S REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES

Throughout 2009-2010, NSW CAG continued to sit on a total of 26 state based committees, including 14 Department of Health Committees and 12 committees coordinated by other organisations. In addition, NSW CAG provided representation on 6 short term tender or review panels for NSW Health. NSW CAG also provided the NSW Health consumer nominee to the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum.

National Committees

- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum

State Committees – Convened by Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Health

- Chronic & Continuing Care Rehabilitation and Recovery Working Group
- Consumer Sub-Committee to the Mental Health Program Council (co-chairing)
- Linking Physical Health and Mental Health...It Makes Sense Initiative – Reference Group
- Multicultural Mental Health Plan Implementation Committee
- Non-acute Inpatient Unit Benchmarking Committee
- NSW Health Expert Advisory Group on Mental Health Research
- NSW Health Mental Health Clinical Advisory Council
- NSW Mental Health Clinical Incident Review Committee
- Official Visitor's Advisory Committee



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- Review Panel for the Macquarie Area Rehabilitation Services (MARS Inc) Program Model
- Rural Mental Health Emergency Care Evaluation Steering Committee
- Sexual Safety Project Working Group
- Statewide Seclusion Reduction Project
- Whole of HASI Evaluation Reference Group

NSW Department of Health Short Term Review Committees

- Baxter Mental Health Awards Selection Committee
- Evaluation Panel for HASI NGO's Expression of Interest
- Evaluation Panel for NGO submissions for providing HASI
- Evaluation Panel for the RFP Submissions (Family and Carer Mental Health Program)
- NSW State Mental Health Telephone Access Line Evaluation Committee
- Review Panel of the Macquarie Chair, Schizophrenia Research Institute Neurobiology Program

State Committees – Convened by other organisations

- Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) Consumer Consultative Committee
- Mental Health Coordinating Council Board
- Mental Health Emergency Care Learning and Development Program Advisory Committee, Institute of Psychiatry

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- Mental Health Information Service Reference Group, MHA
- Mental Health Rights Manual Reference Group, MHCC
- MH-CoPES Stage 3 Statewide Implementation Committee, MHDAO and NSW CAG
- NCOSS Health Policy Advisory Group
- NSW Mental Health Legal Services Project Steering Committee, PIAC
- NSW Mental Health Priority Taskforce
- NSW Mental Health Promotion Reference Group, MHA
- PIAC Individual Advocacy Project
- What Works? Project, MHA, ARAFMI, UWS, NSW CAG



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OTHER REPRESENTATION BY NSW CAG

NSW CAG's representation of consumers at public forums and meetings

- Consultation regarding the establishment of a national mental health consumer body
- Consumer Health Forum – Chronic Care Self Management Workshop
- Mental Health Legal Services Project Key Stakeholder's Forum – Public Interest Advocacy (PIAC)
- National Summit on the Future Directions for Collaborative Mental Health Care convened by the National Advisory Council on Mental Health
- NSW Health's Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Consultation Forum (x2)
- NSW Liberals and Nationals Round Table on Mental Health
- NSW Mental Health Promotion, Illness, Prevention and Early Intervention strategic Development Workshop
- Project being conducted by the University of Sydney regarding CTO Clinical Decision Making

Meetings attended to represent NSW Mental Health Consumers

- A/Prof John Allan, NSW Chief Psychiatrist concerning NSW CAG's letter regarding the implementation of the Smokefree Workplace Policy
- A/Prof John Allan, NSW Chief Psychiatrist concerning the promotion of MH-CoPES nationally
- Advisor to the Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health) concerning the enhancement of community mental health services and NSW CAG's position statement and media release relating to the issue

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- Jenna Bateman and Tina Smith, Mental Health Coordinating Council concerning the joint hosting of a forum to examine consumer roles within the NGO sector
- Mental Health Review Tribunal and MHDAO regarding NSW CAG's concerns over the changes to the administration of initial hearings for involuntary patients in inpatient units
- Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health) concerning NSW CAG's letter regarding the implementation of the Smokefree Workplace Policy and mental health consumer representation at Government convened meetings and forums regarding health
- Rebecca Tidey, Industry Skills Council concerning the development of qualifications for consumer workers
- Shadow Minister for Health regarding the Nationals' and Liberals' mental health policy
- Staff at Justice Health to consider ways to progress consumer participation within forensic mental health services
- Students researching ageing with a lifelong disability
- Trina Soulos, Cultural Perspectives concerning participation of persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds



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NSW CAG'S PRESENTATIONS

To further our work to foster debate around core issues that affect mental health consumers, and to promote awareness of NSW CAG's function and research work, ten presentations were conducted and five articles about NSW CAG and our work were published in other organisations' newsletters.

- Annual Consumer Workers' Forum – building a united approach to the consumer voice
- GP NSW's Mental Health State Update Meeting – to inform of the work of NSW CAG
- Mandala Unit, Gosford – the work of NSW CAG and how the mental health system works
- Justice Health – the work of NSW CAG, stimulating discussion on how to engage Justice Health in this work and to commence mechanisms for greater consumer participation in Justice Health
- TAFE students – the work of NSW CAG
- Parramatta Schizophrenia Support Group – the work of NSW CAG
- Official Visitors Conference – a recovery approach to least restrictive care
- Consumer Centred Health Care Conference – joint initiatives between NSW Health and NSW CAG in consumer participation
- Consumer Centred Health Care Conference – MH-CoPES
- Looking Forward Looking Back Forum – MH-CoPES
- Article – MHCC's August 2009 View from the Peak
- Article – NSW CAG's Media Reselase in CommunityNet November 2009

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- Article – Recovery Forum – Multicultural Mental Health Australia Synergy National Magazine December 2009
- Article – MH-CoPES – Mental Health Association’s Mental Health Matters, April 2010
- Article – PRA Panorama Newsletter, Autumn 2010-09-13
- NSW CAG had a piece presented on Sydney ABC radio about the Recovery Forum in December 2009, and spoke to ABC’s Allison Middleton regarding the need for enhanced community services in response to a death by suicide.
- Five stories from NSW CAG’s DVD, “It’s Only 1/100th of Me” Stories of six people challenging stigma and discrimination faced by people who experience mental illness, were screened on TVS during the weeks surrounding Mental Health Week 2009 to promote community awareness and consideration of the issues surrounding mental illness and the stigma and discrimination that is associated with mental illness.
- NSW CAG’s Executive Officer was quoted in an article in The Daily Telegraph on 16th February 2010, “The mental patients no one cares about”.



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CONFERENCE, SEMINAR AND EVENT ATTENDANCE BY NSW CAG

NSW CAG attended 19 events held by other organisations to inform our knowledge base about new directions in policy and evidence based practice.

- Annual Consumer Workers' Forum
- Building the Agenda - Forum on safety and quality in primary and community health
- Chronic Conditions Self Management Project State Workshop
- Communities in Control Conference
- Consumer- Centred Health Care Conference
- COPMI Conference
- Diabetes and Mental Health Summit
- Diversity in Health Conference
- Emerging Health Policy Research Conference
- Hunter Occupational Therapy Conference
- Mental Health Association's Resilience Conference
- Mental Health Week Launch
- Official Visitors' Conference
- PIAC Project Launch
- Ron Coleman Seminar - From Rhetoric to Reality

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- Statewide Seclusion Reduction Project Forum
- TheMHS Conference
- TheMHS Summer Forum 2010
- Tour of Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute's Laboratories



AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Auditor's report will be presented to NSW CAG members at the organisation's Annual General Meeting. Copies of the audited financial statements will be available for members' viewing via the website.

