



BEING CONNECTED | About Us

Our History

BEING – Mental Health Consumers Ltd. has over 30 years of rich history. Previously known as the NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc (NSW CAG), BEING – Mental Health Consumers was originally established as a ministerial committee in 1992 in response to the First National Mental Health Plan. Consumer advisory groups were established in each state and territory in Australia to provide consumer and carer advice and oversight to the implementation of the First National Mental Health Plan at a state level. As such, NSW CAG was a committee of consumers and carers who provided advice to the Minister for Health.

Each state and territory was called to:

Establish or maintain a mental health consumer advisory committee which is representative of the range of mental health consumers and carers. Such an Advisory Committee shall provide advice, including to both the relevant Minister and Chief Executive Officer of the Agency. (First National Mental Health Plan, 2002).

In 1994, NSW CAG was incorporated and became an organisation within its own right. This meant that NSW CAG was no longer a ministerial committee, but was its own separate legal entity. NSW CAG evolved into an advocacy body for mental health consumers and carers, which gave it the ability to provide advice and input in a lot of different ways at the state level, whilst still retaining close links to the Minister.

In 2014, on its 20th anniversary, NSW CAG unveiled BEING as its new name and brand, which has since been updated to BEING – Mental Health Consumers Ltd. in 2020. This is in line with a long-term strategy to proactively stay at the forefront of mental health advocacy. The new brand identity builds on this rich history but also captures a renewed vision for the future, repackaged in a way that is fresh and exciting.

Our Strategic Vision

Our Vision

All mental health decisions in NSW are informed by consumers who have lived experience.

Our Mission

We represent the voice of NSW mental health consumers to ensure that lived experience is heard and understood by decision-makers, service providers and the community, to effect positive systemic change.

Our Goals

At a systemic level within the mental health system, we:

- Improve the development and implementation of mental health policy
- Ensure consumers are included and represented in all decisions that impact them
- Uphold the human rights of consumers

Our Objectives

1 – Increasing consumer engagement within the mental health system

– Respect and dignity for all to enable inclusion



- Embedding lived experience at all levels of the mental health system
- Increasing BEING’s brand profile to reach more consumers

2 – Advocating for Mental Health reform

- Advocating for under-served consumers so that all consumers’ needs are included in reform
- Advocating for alternatives to the medical model so that consumers have more choices about their mental health care
- Engaging proactively with the top five issues that consumers are concerned about

3 – Building advocacy capability of consumers

- Supporting consumers’ capability to self-advocate, and participate fully in systemic advocacy
- Establishing a primary network of NSW consumers to enable system reform

4 – Ensuring consumers’ needs are heard by decision-makers

- Holding governments accountable in delivering their mental health commitments
- Holding standards-setting bodies accountable in their policy and service development
- Advocating for data transparency, collection and reporting in the sector

Our Guiding Principles

- Creating space for people with lived/living experience of mental health issues to have their voices heard
- Ensuring that recovery-oriented and trauma-informed practice underpins all aspects of BEING’s operations
- The belief that services and a life free of stigma and discrimination are the human rights of every person
- Providing capacity-building opportunities for all people with lived/living experience to grow
- Ensuring that everything that BEING – Mental Health Consumers does is consumer-led