NEWSLETTER

Fortnightly e-newsletter of the Mental Health Council of Australia
Volume 3 Number 5 *21st October 2005*

MHCA Newsletter is published by:
Mental Health Council of Australia
PO Box 174 DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600
Phone 02 6285 3100
Email: admin@mhca.org.au

MHCA Patrons:
Senator the Hon Helen Coonan, Minister for Communications, IT and the Arts
Prof Allan Fels AO, Dean, Australia and New Zealand School of Government
Mr David Galbally QC, Partner of Browne & Co.
Ms Jessica Rowe, Channel 10 Newsreader
Mr Peter Overton, Journalist, 60 Minutes

MHCA Executive Members:
Mr Keith Wilson, Chair
Ms Dawn Smith, Deputy Chair
Ms Judy Hardy, Treasurer
Mr Rob Knowles
Ms Ingrid Ozols

MHCA Secretariat:
Sebastian Rosenberg, Deputy CEO
Allison Diacono, Finance Manager
Stephen Morris, Senior Policy Officer
Deborah Nesbitt, Communications Manager
Peter Adamiak, Consumer Advisor/Policy Officer
Keith Mahar, Consumer Advisor/Policy Officer
Lynnette Eager, EA to the CEO & Chair
Hedley Middlebrook, Administration Officer

MHCA CEO:
Mr John Mendoza

In this issue:

- CEO's Report
- Other

▪ CEO's Report

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) 2005

I am pleased to report that WMHD 2005 held on the 10th of October 2005 was a great success. The National launch of WMHD was held at Reconciliation Place, Parkes Canberra and marked the commencement of National Mental Health Week.

WMHD day is internationally designated by the World Health Organisation and the World Federation for Mental Health as the 10th October each year. In Australia the day also marks the commencement of National Mental Health Week.

The Canberra launch was attended by the following dignitaries:

- Dr Sev Ozdowski, Federal Human Rights Commissioner & Acting Disability Commissioner
- ACM Angus Houston, Chief of the Australian Defence Force
- Professor Peter Fricker, Head of the Australian Institute of Sport
- The Hon. Christopher Pyne, Parliamentary Secretary for the Federal Minister of Health and Aging
- Federal Opposition spokesperson on Health and Ageing, Ms Julia Gillard
- ACT Leader of the Opposition, Mr Brendan Smyth

Other attendees included:

- Members of the Australian Defence Force
- Representatives of Telstra, the Pharmaceutical industry, the Australian Divisions of General Practice, several Commonwealth Departments and agencies, and local mental health community organisations.

The launch was hosted by Dawn Smith, Deputy Chair of the MHCA and CEO of Lifeline. Key note speakers included; Dr Sev Ozdowski, ACM Angus Houston and The Hon. Christopher Pyne.

The 2005 World Mental Health Day theme was "***Better Mental Health through Physical Exercise"***. The MHCA promoted a campaign built around three key messages for people to remember and associate with good mental health: *"Act-Belong-Commit".*

The cross section of organisations present on the day and involved in the planning and staging of the *Be Active for your Mental Health Program* is no doubt an indication of the growing recognition of the importance of good mental health to our overall well being.

The WMHD launch represented an opportunity to raise awareness across the Australian Community of ways we can individually and collectively enhance our mental well-being. The program promotes three major ways for individuals to build and maintain positive mental health and increase community cohesion. These steps also indicate an increasing contribution to an individual's self of sense:

1. **Act –** individuals should strive to keep themselves active in as many ways as possible, including physically, socially and cognitively, e.g. walking, reading, visiting a museum, doing a crossword, visiting a friend.

2. **Belong –** becoming a member of an organisation to strengthen an individual's connection to the community, e.g. joining a book club or walking group, going to a community meetings and events, participating more often in organisations of which the person is already a member.

3. **Commit -** the level of effort an individual commits to the activities they are engaged in, e.g. becoming a volunteer for charity or community organisation, taking up challenging tasks, becoming involved in a good cause.

Workplaces are particularly important places for mental health promotion. The presence of the Australian Institute of Sport, Telstra and Chief of Defence and other senior ADF personnel at the launch was very pleasing for the MHCA. All of these organisations have either developed or are in the process of developing mental health strategies to ensure they are responding to the total health needs of their staff and broader constituencies. In addition these organisations are at the forefront of efforts to tackle stigma, improve practices and ultimately reduce the burden of disability from mental health problems. Partnerships between business, community organisations and governments are vital if we are to more effectively tackle the growing incidence and complexity of mental health problems in our community.

The MCHA would like to formally like to extend its appreciation and thank all partner organisations who contributed to WMHD 2004 and the Be Active for Your Mental Health program:

- Australian Government Department of Health and Aging
- Members of the MHCA-Pharmaceutical Collaboration
- Australian Divisions of General Practice
- The Mentally Healthy WA Campaign
- VIcHealth
- National Heart Foundation
- Out and About Marketing and the National Basketball Leauge
- Telstra
- Australian Sports Commission and Australian Institute of Sport
- Australian Defence Force
- The Commercial television networks and SBS, particularly Channel Nine for the production of the CSA.

I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and support of the MHCA secretariat in ensuring the launch was successful.

▪ Other

Lifeline Telephone Counsellor Course

Western Sydney Lifeline will be holding a telephone counselor course starting 6th February 2006, finishing Monday 26th June 2005. The course is conducted on a part time basis over several Monday nights and over several Saturday's.

Please see the attached flyer for more information.

The MHCA Newsletter is a forum to provide information to people interested in mental health matters in Australia. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to the Australian mental health sector. Please contact the MHCA on 6285 3100 or admin@mhca.org.au. Some articles published within the MHCA Newsletter are provided by third parties and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MHCA. *Home*