



# ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

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## GOALS

To provide accountable broad representation that is informed, valued and supported by the Network;

To provide proactive systemic advocacy from a Consumer perspective;

To work collaboratively with other organisations and mental health Consumers;

To create and build a supportive environment within the organisation and outside which is empowering to mental health Consumers; and

To govern the Network in a responsible and sustainable way.

## BOARD 2010-11

<b>Colin Hales</b>	Chair (until 16/05/2012)
<b>William Barreda</b>	Deputy Chair
<b>Julie McMahon</b>	Secretary
<b>Pam Boyer</b>	Treasurer
<b>Jason Barritt (Assoc)</b>	Ordinary Member
<b>Peter Dwyer</b>	Ordinary Member
<b>Kerry Fry</b>	Ordinary Member
<b>Phillip Green</b>	Ordinary Member
<b>Imran Hakimi</b>	Ordinary Member
<b>Matthias Lehmann</b>	Ordinary Member
<b>Scott Ryder</b>	Ordinary Member (from 19/06/2012)
<b>Lyle Upson</b>	Ordinary Member (until 10/12/2011)

## STAFF

<b>Dalane Drexler</b>	Executive Officer
<b>Amanda Davies</b>	Program Manager
<b>Stephanie Shu-jen</b>	Community Education Coordinator
<b>Michelle Little</b>	Policy & Participation Coordinator (01/06/2011-03/01/2012)
<b>Susan Corbett</b>	CRP Coordinator (from 23/04/2012)
<b>Keah Woodgate</b>	Administration Officer
<b>Sophie Maria</b>	Administration Assistant (Nexus contract)
<b>Jessica Dodd</b>	Administrative Assistant (Nexus contract)

## **VISION**

*More recovery for more people*

## **MISSION**

*With us not to us – facilitating an environment of collaboration and mutual respect within the mental health sector wherein mental health consumers are empowered to represent, advocate and engage in policy dialogue.*

## **VALUES**

*Our values reflect our guiding principles of social justice, integrity, respect, empowerment and compassion. We view our values as essential nutrients for the health of our organisation. Our values reflect what staff, committee and members expect of each other in their work together and how we work with others in our representative, advocacy and collaborative capacities.*

## CHAIR'S REPORT

Although I only recently became the Chair of the Network, and this was not in the financial year for which this report is being written; I was Secretary of the Board during the current financial year so it is in this capacity that I write this report.

I would like to thank all Network members for the considerable contributions they have made by participating at Drop-In time, in workshops and forums, by attending meetings as Consumer Representatives, and by attending mental health related activities and providing feedback to the Network and to interested parties.

Valuable achievements have been made, at times when members have been unwell or not fully appreciated, and this makes the achievements even more valuable. Everybody's efforts continue to ensure that the Network remains a strong peak systemic advocacy body for mental health consumers in the ACT, which is a remarkable accomplishment given its humble beginnings just over ten years ago.

I would like to thank Colin Hales for the energy and originality with which he fulfilled the role of Chair before his recent resignation; William Barreda for his intelligence and support as Deputy Chair; Pam Boyer for her skill and dedication as the Treasurer; and all the Board members for their perseverance and co-operation to achieve our agenda items.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the Network staff who are knowledgeable, helpful and resourceful: Our Executive Officer, Dalane Drexler, who led our strong staffing team through the year to meet our strategic goals. This team included Amanda Davies, Susan Corbett, Stephanie Shu-jen and Keah Woodgate who each excelled in their respective positions. I would like to mention how much I appreciated the caring, positive nature of former staff member Michelle Little while she was at the Network, and also the time and efforts of Sophie Maria and Jessica Dodd who undertook short-term workplace learning placements with the Network.

This year the Board worked through finalising internal policies which included a full package of CRP policies and procedures which have proven to be a very valuable and useful tool for coordinators and Consumer Representatives alike. We have also begun working through the personnel section of the policy manual which is tightening up our procedures around employee recruitment, probation periods, training and support. As Chair for the next reporting period I look forward to us all continuing this valuable process so that we can continue to grow and flourish as a strong consumer organisation.

A project issue we concentrated on was our opposition to the complete smoking ban to be imposed on mental health Consumers throughout ACT facilities from 1 January 2013, despite previous assurances of designated outdoor smoking areas. This is to include the new Adult Mental Health Unit, the Mental Health Assessment Unit, Calvary Ward 2N and Brian Hennessy Rehabilitation Centre among other treatment facilities. Unfortunately it appears to be a losing battle, as this is being imposed by government and there is no negotiation permitted. The Network recognises that smoking is a health hazard and encourages choices Consumers make that can lead to positive health outcomes, but objects to the total ban because it will be stressful for consumers to be forced to break an addiction at a time when they are at their most vulnerable, and it may contribute to a deterioration in their mental health. I do not smoke, but do comfort eat when anxious and know that if I was forced on a diet when I was not motivated or

emotionally stable, then I would feel miserable and break the diet as soon as opportunity presented - even if this was unhealthy for me. However, if I received support to diet when I was well and able to make an informed decision, I would have a much higher chance of success. I believe this same principle should apply to mental health Consumers with respect to smoking.

As Chair for the coming year, I look forward to continuing to work together with you all to achieve even greater things.

**Julie McMahon**  
**Secretary**

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The 2011-12 financial year has been a busy and productive one for the Network.

Firstly, my thanks to the year's Board who worked hard to achieve some significant policy and procedural goals. A particular, thank you to Colin Hales and William Barreda who worked collaboratively to lead the Board throughout the year. Financially, the Network finished the period in a strong position, as expected with thanks to Pam Boyer and Lesley Hyndal, having met our funding goals effectively throughout the course of the year.

I would also like to acknowledge the staffing team who worked tirelessly in often difficult circumstances to meet organisational goals and work as a strong team. Amanda Davies, Stephanie Shu-jen and Keah Woodgate remained with us for the full year, with Keah planning to move on from the Network early in the 2012-13 year. Throughout the year we also had the pleasure of working with Michelle Little, Sophie Maria and Jessica Dodd who have all since moved on following their placements at the Network, as well as our dedicated team of Consumer Representatives and other active members.

Organisationally, we were pleased to work with Bradley Foxlewin in the finalisation of his project report: *What is happening at the Seclusion Review that makes a difference?*; the culmination of over two years work alongside several mental health Consumers, ACT Health and other stakeholders. I am also very happy to report the Board's decision to upgrade the Network's computers on a rotating basis, with the Members Area computers being replaced with much needed high quality systems.

Over the course of the year the Network's Board and staff have worked hard to meet our strategic goals as laid out in the Strategic Plan 2010-13. Some of the ways in which this has occurred are as follows:

### *Priority 1: Build and sustain organisational capacity at a staff and committee level*

In the first half of the financial year we undertook the significant task of reviewing and rewriting the Network's Constitution. Our old Constitution was severely outdated and did not accurately reflect the nature and scope of the organisation. This task was made possible through the dedication of our members who attended regular working group meetings and forums, with particular mention to Colin Hales and Lyle Upson who were regular contributors and drivers of this process. Completion of this task is a major stepping stone moving the Network forward, which allowed us to place high emphasis on reviewing our internal policies in the second half of the year.

Our most noteworthy achievement in reviewing the Network's policy and procedures has been the creation of a well defined set of Consumer Representative Program (CRP) policies and procedures. Prior to the review that led to the creation of this set of documents, the CRP relied on one cumbersome document that had substantial gaps and other issues. The review led to clear procedures around recruitment, reimbursement and support, as well as having provision for mentors to support newly

trained Consumer Representatives or others who are returning to representative work after a period of absence and request additional support. Work is currently underway to review, revise and develop the personnel policies and procedures, which will take some time due to the nature and breadth of the policy section.

The Network's job descriptions, inclusive of Consumer Representatives, have been reviewed and revised over the period in order to ensure optimum alignment with strategic goals, with the Network finishing the year in a strong position with respect to personnel.

*Priority 2: Grow the membership of the Network*

The Network team has worked hard over the period to streamline membership, with a database being instituted towards the middle of the year. This has been a major step in recording and accessing information in a secure way that addresses privacy concerns for our members and increases usability for our program and administrative staff. An example of how this change has been utilised is the cross-collaboration of the program staff in each area, with the CRP coordinator automatically being able to ascertain whether people have completed training and are eligible to begin representative work.

Membership of the Network grew substantially over the period, in no small part due to the quality training provided under our community education program. We commenced the year with 243 members and finished with 274, with some members moving on from the Network due to relocation or other personal reasons, showing solid growth in membership throughout the year. We look forward to continuing the process of growing our membership over the coming year, and particularly hope to increase our work with young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

*Priority 3: Grow, promote and support the Consumer representative program*

As reported in priority one, significant efforts were made during the second half of the year to revise and define the Network's CRP policies and procedures. This has provided a strong, clear framework for the recruiting, retaining, training and supporting Consumer Representatives.

The Network continues to work strongly on topical areas of policy and legislation, the detail of which can be located in the Policy and Projects Program report within this document. We continue to be involved in processes relating to peer support workforce and other areas of significance to mental health Consumers.

The improved ACT Health reimbursement for Consumer Representatives that was finalised in the last reporting period has proven to be a welcome and much needed change for Consumers volunteering their time and expertise on committees. We are pleased to support this initiative by bringing our reimbursement rates in line with the changes implemented in ACT Health policy, in order to appropriately acknowledge the valuable work of our Consumer Representatives.

*Priority 4: Develop outreach and collaboration*

As the Network's membership grows we find ourselves working closely with fellow travellers from all walks of life who provide us with the essential ingredient to a strong Consumer organisation. We encourage our members to become involved in ways that suit their needs and abilities, and continue to provide as many opportunities as possible for individuals to contribute to the work being done in the sector.

Since relocating to a much larger space six months prior to this reporting period, the Members Area has been utilised by members and the community as a venue for collaboration and outreach among the mental health community and more broadly. Our Drop-In times are frequented by many members who come together to share stories, eat lunch together, and utilise the free facilities on offer to our members. This space has become an essential tool for us to meet fellow travellers and learn all they have to share with us. We look forward to continuing and broadening our work in this area.



**Dalane Drexler**  
Executive Officer

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

This has been my first year as Treasurer for the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network and it has been a privilege to be able to be involved in this role. It is great to see the Network on such a sound footing and so efficiently managed.

I would like to thank Lesley Hyndal who has been the bookkeeper for the Network for the past financial year for her very capable and proficient operational administration of the books, including the preparation for our annual audit. Lesley is reliable, available, and makes the management of the Network's finances very straight forward.

Dalane manages the finances of the Network in a thorough and careful manner and is to be credited for creating a culture of extreme accountability in the organisation. I thank her and her team for making my job as treasurer so easy.

The Network had an income of \$331,168 for the financial year 2011-12 and expenditure of \$317,032, predominantly from our recurrent ACT Health funding grant, leaving a surplus of \$14,154. This surplus adds to the assets of the organisation, leaving a balance of our funds at \$68,962 which is a welcome result for the year.

**Pam Boyer**

Treasurer

## **COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT**

### **THE PROGRAM**

The Advocacy and Representation Training course, created in 2010, has completed its third year of training, and contributed to expanding the volunteer base of the Network's Consumer Representative Program.

### **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

Four terms of the ART course were delivered in the reporting period, including four terms of Self-Advocacy and three terms of Consumer Advocacy, totalling 20 participants in this period. Graduating participants from the ART course have gone on to become Consumer Representatives, nominate for the Network's Board, and also express interest to co-facilitate sessions of ART which is a fantastic result.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

ART course participants, other Network members and past graduates provide regular input into the course which ensures continuous improvement is made. This year's evaluation saw the need for more structure around co-facilitation and as such, extra material and support for future co-facilitators is being prepared to reflect this feedback.

### **PROGRAM DELIVERY**

ART Module 1: Self-Advocacy

Session 1: Introduction and Self-Esteem

Session 2: Self Expression

Session 3: Self Confidence and Self Reliance

Session 4: Self Determination

Session 5: Self Development

ART Module 2: Consumer Advocacy

Consumer Advocacy: *In Context*

Consumer Advocacy: *A Map of Democracy*

Consumer Advocacy: *Social Justice Principles*

Consumer Advocacy: *Committee Skills*

Consumer Advocacy: *Recovery Principles*

**Stephanie Shu-jen**

Community Education Coordinator

## **CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM REPORT**

The Network has continued to support Consumer Representatives taking part in government and non-government committees and other opportunities, helping to achieve our objectives of equity and access to better mental health and wellbeing and supporting the empowerment of Consumers to engage in the development, improvement and expansion of mental health and related services in the ACT.

The Networks commitment to continual quality improvement to ensure ongoing effectiveness has seen changes to policies and procedures for the Consumer Representative Program. These changes include the standard term for Consumer Representative positions being capped at two years. After this time the position will be re-advertised to ensure fair process. Consumer Representatives are welcome to reapply for the same position once their two year term is complete.

We had a pool of over 50 members eligible to be Consumer Representatives with diverse skills, knowledge and experience during the period. While not all of these members were active on committees we value their continued participation with the Network. We wish to thank those involved with the Consumer Representative Program, helping to raise awareness of the needs of mental health Consumers and advocating for improvements to services and programs in the ACT.

### **2011-2012 CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES**

Adele Lewin	Jane Williams	Ruth Dunnicliff-Hagan
Bradley Foxlewin	Julie McMahon	Sarah Sadler
Charmaine Rose	Kerry Fry	Sarah Shepherd
Colin Hales	Leila Lines	Sarah Stringer
David Lovegrove	Maureen McInerney	Stephen Price
Faye Digby	Patricia Green	William Barreda
Jane Grace	Peter Dwyer	

### **2011-2012 COMMITTEES**

#### **ACT Health**

- Access and Acute Collaborative Engagement Forum
- Acute Adult Inpatient Unit Executive Reference Group
- Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit User Group
- Bimberi User Group
- Brian Hennessy Consumer Companions
- Community Health Centres Executive Reference Group
- Executive Strategy and Business Planning Committee
- HIP Project Control Group
- Information Management and Technology Committee
- Mental Health Act Review Advisory Committee and its working groups including:
  - Decision Making Working Group
  - Principles and Objectives Working Group

- Advance Agreements Working Group
- Involuntary Physical Care Working Group
- Technical Matters Working Group
- Mental Health Consumer and Carer Research Advisory Group
- Mental Health Services Plan Executive Strategic Oversight Group
- Mental Health Services Plan Strategic Oversight Group
- Mental Health Week Planning Committee
- Policy and Standard Operating Procedure Development and Review Committee
- Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Implementation and Evaluation Working Group
- Publications Advisory Committee
- Recovery Plan Implementation Advisory Group
- Redesign Steering Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Safety and Quality Committee
- Seclusion and Restraint Review Meeting
- Suicide Prevention, Implementation and Evaluation Working Group

#### **Other**

- ACT Crime Prevention and Community Safety Forum
- ACT Medicare Local Community Advisory Committee
- ACT Medicare Local Mental Health Advisory Committee
- Housing and Support Initiative Advisory Committee
- Mental Health Community Coalition (ACT) Board of Governance
- Mental Health Community Coalition (ACT) Consumer and Carer Caucus
- Mental Health Community Coalition (ACT) Consumer and Carer Workforce Development Steering Committee
- Mental Health Community Coalition (ACT) Qualifications Strategy Development & Implementation Group
- Mental Health Community Coalition (ACT) Sector Development Reference Group
- Mental Health Recovery Group ACT
- Mindscapes Festival Working Group
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum
- Private Mental Health Consumer and Carers Network (Australia)
- St Vincent de Paul Society Compeer Advisory Group
- Woden Community Service Transitions to Recovery Advisory Group
- Women's Centre for Health Matters Women and Mental Health Working Group

**Susan Corbett**

CRP Coordinator

## **POLICY AND PROJECTS PROGRAM REPORT**

The Network continues to provide a strong Consumer voice on policy issues through the participation of Consumer Representatives on committees, working with community sector partners and providing input to inquiries and consultative processes at the ACT and national levels. We work formally and informally to ensure that Consumers are a valued part of the design and implementation of mental health policy and services.

During the reporting year we have strengthened relationships with other community sector organisations, including ACTCOSS, HCCA, WCHM, MHCCACT and Carers ACT, working collaboratively on policy issues, where appropriate, to maximise our influence.

During the reporting year the Network made or contributed to submissions on significant policy areas including:

- Draft Stage 3 Model of Care - Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit
- Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services
- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – A Good Idea for the ACT?
- Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services
- Improved Support Stronger Communities - Antisocial Behaviour Specialist Response and Support in Housing ACT Discussion Paper
- Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation 2011
- 2012-13 ACT Budget priorities
- Exposure Draft: Public Advocate (Official Visitors) Amendment Bill 2012

The lead up to the opening of the Adult Mental Health Unit, replacing the old Psychiatric Services Unit, in March 2012 was a very busy time. The Network contributed through Consumer Representatives on committees finalising the draft Model of Care, as well as providing a submission.

The Network also attended consultations and meetings on the Draft Roadmap for National Mental Health Reform 2012-22 and the National Recovery Oriented Mental Health Practice Framework. We have provided comments on policy approaches and consistency with current legislation in draft ACT Health policies and SOPs, in addition to comments provided through the Policy and Standard Operating Procedure Development and Review Committee.

Despite ongoing lobbying by the Network against the decision that all ACT mental health facilities will become smoke-free from 1 January 2013, the Health Directorate continues to insist on the inhumane practice of prohibiting a smoker from smoking even when admitted to a mental health facility in a crisis situation. This is likely to be a big issue for 2012-13 as Consumers continue to oppose this decision.

We participated in the MHCA State workshop in March 2012 and have been actively involved in the planning and procurement processes for the proposed Mental Health Consumer and Carer Research Unit, and in workshop discussions regarding the proposed sub-acute mental health services for a north side facility. Members and staff have also provided input and monitored the development of plans for the National

Disability Insurance Scheme, as well as activity based funding for hospitals. Each poses significant challenges and opportunities for mental health Consumers.

There was action in the first part of the reporting year on the review of the Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act 1994. Consumer Representatives and staff participated in several meetings of the Review Advisory Committee and numerous working groups to finalise recommendations for amendments to the Mental Health Act. Two rounds of consultation on Exposure Drafts of amendments are expected in 2012-13, so this will be an important policy focus for the coming year.

Network member Bradley Foxlewin finalised his report on the work of the Seclusion and Restraint Review Meeting (SRRM) in reducing seclusion rates at the Psychiatric Services Unit at the Canberra Hospital. Consumer Representatives on the SRRM play a valuable broader role in driving cultural change at the Hospital.

During the first part of the reporting year we also completed the work on revising and updating the Network's constitution, through a small working group and members' forums. The new constitution was approved at a Special General Meeting in time to be in place for the 2011 AGM. In the second part of the reporting year, we turned our attention to internal policies and procedures, and reviewed and updated all the CRP policies, as well as some personnel policies. The work of reviewing all of our internal policies to make sure they are up to date and reflect good governance practices is continuing.

The Network has a strong and active base of members who provide ongoing policy input and information. Our thanks to all of those members who provide their views and contribute to this important work.

**Amanda Davies**  
Program Manager

## **INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **Drop-Ins and Other Events Hosted**

- HCCA Forum
- Co-morbidity Bus Tour C
- ACT Medicare Local Drop-In
- Search Policy Forum
- Three Constitution Forums, with regular working group
- Special General Meeting - instituting the Constitution
- Annual General Meeting
- 2011 Annual Christmas/End of Year BBQ
- ADACAS Forum

### **Participation in Conferences, Training and Other Events**

- Conversations with Mary O'Hagan
- More than Medication Conference
- Seclusion and Restraint Review Meeting Research Project
- 21<sup>st</sup> The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference (Cairns)
- TheMHS Summer Forum (Sydney)
- MHCA World Mental Health Day Press Club Luncheon
- MHCA Grace Groom Oration
- OzHelp ASIST and SafeTalk
- Senior First Aid
- Human Rights Training
- Mental Health ACT Training Courses
- Social Role Valorization Training
- Volunteer Management Course
- MIEACT Moving Minds
- Launch of Mental Health Week
- Mental Health Week Committee and Events
- Selection Panel for Official Visitors
- Consumer Companions discussions
- Volunteering ACT Learning Circle
- Community Sector Review Implementation Workshop
- ACT Charter of Rights for People who Experience Mental Health Issues
- Community Development Network (CDNet) Working Group
- ACT Budget Meeting
- Housing ACT Consultation - Antisocial Behaviour Specialist Response
- MHCCACT Budget Forum
- Crime Prevention and Community Safety Forum
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Comorbidity Interagency Day
- Community Mental Health Managers and Eos Group
- ACTCOSS Board Basics Training
- Human Rights Commission Forum - 20 years of anti-discrimination law
- Quarterly Lunchtime Forum for Volunteer Managers

- Opening of the Adult Mental Health Unit
- Mental Health State Consultation Workshop - ACT
- National Mental Health Recovery Framework Roundtable
- Mental Health Commission Discussion
- MHJHADS Redesign Projects Forum

### **Joint Forums and Partnerships**

ACT Quarterly Consumer, Carer and Community Forums (with MHCCACT, ACT Health Division of MHJF&AD and Carers ACT):

- Trauma Informed Care
- Mental Health Community Policing Initiative
- New Mental Health Inpatient Unit

ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarships Scheme

Mindscapes Festival

Mental Health Week Committee

MIEACT and 2XX Opening Minds Radio Show – quarterly shows by the Network

Self-Advocacy course co-funded by ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service

Ainslie Village 'The Lodge' – Self-Advocacy Course

Brian Hennessy Rehabilitation Centre - Self-Advocacy Course