

update

LIVING WELL IN OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome to the Commission's email newsletter with updates on our activities and other mental health news.



Indigenous suicide and mental health summit launches new leadership group

Indigenous and international leaders in mental health gathered in Perth on 23 and 24 June to address the unacceptably high rates of suicide in Australian Indigenous communities, and for the launch of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health (NATSILMH).

NATSILMH's aim is to help restore, maintain and promote the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by advocating and providing advice and leadership in these areas. It also aims to reduce the high rates of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. *(continues on next page)*

Strategic Plan

In May 2014 the Commission delivered to Government the draft Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW. The Plan is the result of an intensive year-long period of consultation and policy development.

More than 2100 people participated in the Commission's stakeholder consultation forums and community meetings all over NSW, and among those more than 800 were consumers or carers. Many more people offered their expertise through an innovative series of online discussions where they were able to sign up to see and comment upon reform ideas early in their development.

The Commission was also informed by the expertise of individuals and organisations which carried out specialised research projects or made submissions.

The Commission is confident therefore that the Plan – and a related Report, which makes the case for mental health reform from the perspective of consumers, carers and front-line service providers – carries the authority of the community as a whole and in particular of people who live with mental illness.

The Government is now reviewing the Plan and developing its response to the Actions recommended in it, ahead of its launch. This is a detailed process, particularly because the Plan proposes whole-of-government reforms that involve coordination between multiple agencies, and it will inevitably take some months to complete.

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NATSILMH is a core group of senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the areas of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention. The group is jointly supported by the state and national Mental Health Commissions with many of the group's representatives involved with the Commissions and other leading Indigenous health organisations.

[Read more](#)

Events

- ❖ **[Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry Conference](#)**
12 – 15 August, Hong Kong
- ❖ **[15th International Mental Health Conference](#)**
25 – 27 August, Gold Coast
- ❖ **[The Mental Health Services Conference](#)**
26 – 29 August, Perth
- ❖ **[Wear it Purple Day](#)**
29 August, nation wide
- ❖ **[5th Annual Correctional Services Healthcare Summit](#)**
28 – 29 August, Melbourne
- ❖ **[NSW Rural Health and Research Congress](#)**
9 – 11 September, Dubbo
- ❖ **[World Suicide Prevention Day](#)**
10 September
- ❖ **[R U OK Day?](#)**
11 September
- ❖ **[NSW MHA Mental Health Matters Awards](#)**
30 September, Sydney

[See more events on our website](#)

The Commission is proud to have delivered a Plan that is ambitious yet achievable, and which has the potential to make important positive differences in the lives of people who experience mental illness, while also promoting resilience, wellbeing and capacity for everyone.

We thank everyone who has contributed to this work, which belongs not to the Commission but to the whole community, and we look forward to being able to share, discuss and debate the ideas within it.

Read more about the draft [Strategic Plan](#) on our website.

Your stories



Ray Berry

Ray Berry is proud to be helping consumers on their recovery journey at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital's Adult Sub-acute Unit.

At age 52, Ray has achieved his goals of coming off the Disability Support Pension while working full time in the mental health sector, and is now blossoming as a peer support worker.

"From being unemployed to a volunteer with the Schizophrenia Fellowship and now working full time in six years is a very big achievement for me," Ray said.

"Something I strive for every day is to get up and go to work. I just love it. It's very empowering for me to be working with a whole bunch of different people that I've never worked with before, and helping consumers to live their own lives and become part of the community."

Living with mental illness all his life, but only diagnosed with schizophrenia at age 32, Ray has great insight into his illness. Music is very important to Ray, which he uses to eliminate the voices and hallucinations he experiences.

"Wherever I go I carry my iPod and headphones, so if I start to feel my voices coming on I can listen to music and continue to work normally," Ray said. "My voices can't compete with the music."

Ray believes that setting goals is important for his recovery and he is now aiming to complete a Certificate IV in Peer Support Work.

From the Commissioner



It has been a busy time for the Commission following our submission of the draft Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW to Government in May, and as we head into the second half of 2014 I am excited by the prospect of helping to bring about real reform focused on the things mental health consumers need and want.

In June I had the pleasure of launching Mission Australia and The Black Dog Institute's 2014 Youth Mental Health Report. The Report highlights the psychological pressures on Australian youth, their increasing vulnerability and need for more support for their transition into adult life. The Report underscores the need to provide our young people with safe home and school environments that foster genuine opportunities for education and social engagement, giving them the best possible chance at leading fulfilling lives. Its findings are in line with one of the Commission's key principles: that an emphasis on keeping people well at important times of their lives can pay an enormous social dividend by supporting them to become or remain active, contributing members of their community.

Mental health reform cannot happen without the commitment of individuals, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise three people who have worked tirelessly to bring about positive change.

Following the end of Dame Marie Bashir's 13 year tenure as Governor of NSW I'd like to recognise the invaluable contribution she has made to mental health in NSW. As a revered psychiatrist and a public servant in mental health, Dame Marie has met, listened to and cared for the very people the Commission stands for. Dame Marie is a genuine advocate for all those who experience mental illness, their families and carers.

I'd like to extend congratulations also to Deputy Commissioner Professor Alan Rosen and Jan Roberts who were both recognised for their contribution to mental health in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Professor Rosen AO was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia for his distinguished service to medicine in the field of mental health, national health reform and to professional organisations. Jan Roberts OAM received the Medal of the Order of Australia for her wonderful work in rural mental health and women's health services. Jan has been a pioneer in mental health and women's health services in rural areas since the 1970s.

On a more general note, we'd like to include stories in our newsletter from people with lived experience of mental illness, or people doing great work in the community so if you're happy to share your story please fill out a [submission form](#) on our website or email socialmedia@mhc.nsw.gov.au.



Deputy Commissioner Prof. Alan Rosen recognised

The Commission is very proud to congratulate Deputy Commissioner Professor Alan Rosen on receiving the distinguished award of Officer of the Order of Australia.

[Read more](#)

Suicide Prevention Australia's Lived Experience Symposium

[Suicide Prevention Australia](#) hosted Australia's first ever forum to bring people with a lived experience of suicide together and discuss the future of suicide prevention. The Commission's Communications Officer Maddie Gay participated with around 30 people from across Australia.

[Read more](#)

Aboriginal health workers recognised

The Aboriginal Health College of the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of New South Wales' Graduation was held on June 6, 2014. NSW Deputy Mental Health Commissioner Dr Robyn Shields AM was master of ceremonies for the proceedings with Her Excellency Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of NSW delivering an inspiring keynote address to the eighty-five graduates.

[Read more](#)

National LGBTI MindOUT Conference

On 26 and 27 June the Commission attended the inaugural MindOUT! LGBTI Mental Health Conference, hosted by the National LGBTI Health Alliance. The conference, themed Courageous Voices: Seeds of Hope and Transformation, explored the social, psychological and cultural impacts on the mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people.

[Read more](#)

2014 Mental Health Matters Awards

The Mental Health *Matters* Awards are designed to recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations who have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the general mental health of communities in NSW over the past year.

[Read more](#)

Deputy Commissioner presents at Legal Aid NSW Conference



The Legal Aid NSW Criminal Law Conference was held on 2-4 July 2014. NSW Deputy Mental Health Commissioner Bradley Foxlewin gave a presentation on the NSW Mental Health Commission's high ambitions for consumer employment.

[Read more](#)

Living well

Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) video series



ASCA has released a 10 minute video series exploring the challenges and triumphs experienced by adult survivors of child abuse.

Featuring the voices of survivors and health professionals, the videos carry important messages about how, with the right help and support, recovery can be achieved.

The videos can be accessed from the ASCA homepage at www.asca.org.au

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