Meeting of Participants in Inaugural National Mental Health Leaders Project

Sydney, 5-6 May 2014

Communique

The first meeting of the 11 participants in the inaugural National Mental Health Leaders Project was held in Sydney on 5-6 May 2014.

The project supports the development of existing consumer and carer mental health leaders and advocates, with the aim of finding and developing the next generation of national mental health leaders. It is an initiative of the National Mental Health Commission in collaboration with the Mental Health Council of Australia, and it is supported by the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum. In addition to individual mentoring and leadership development activities, participants have the opportunity to contribute to the National Mental Health Commission’s work and to the work of the mental health sector more broadly.

This project exists to address a perceived gap in development opportunities for mental health leaders. Importantly, it creates opportunities for people to contribute as equal partners and to keep developing the capacity of the consumer and carer movement.

The two day workshop was spent in a spirit of joint purpose with the aim of sharing experiences, learning from each other and invited speakers, and exploring opportunities for further development.

This communique has been developed to underline participants’ shared and common commitment to supporting and driving change.

The participants in the inaugural National Mental Health Leaders Project believe:

- Everyone has the potential to be a leader.
- We are ‘standing on the shoulders’ of the mental health leaders, advocates, consumers and carers that have gone before us, and without their efforts we wouldn’t have made the progress we have in Australia.
- It is important to recognise those continuing to lead within our communities, as well as those to come. By working together, we can help ensure all Australians can live a ‘contributing life’.
- Real improvement in the mental health and wellbeing of all Australians requires many voices, shared leadership and mutual respect.
- Consumers and carers must be consistently engaged, and existing structures, leaders and organisations supported wherever possible.
• Capacity building and leadership development within the consumer and carer movement is vital and must be supported and promoted across the entire mental health landscape.

• We must strive for continuous improvement in the mental health and wellbeing of all Australians, and this includes meeting national and international standards and commitments.

• The National Mental Health Leaders Project has the potential to provide a new model for capacity building that could be replicated in different areas.

As a group and as individuals we commit to:

• Working together respectfully and using what we learn in the National Mental Health Leaders Project to inform our ongoing work.

• Supporting and encouraging others, including existing consumer and carer mental health leaders and advocates.

• Working to make the National Mental Health Leaders Project a model of how we want other mental health leaders, advocates and groups to interact. In particular, facilitating the breaking down of silos and stigmas, and encouraging collaboration and respect.

• Being kind and understanding, and encouraging everyone in the mental health landscape to work together for a better future for all Australians.

This commitment will be further served by continuing collaboration and partnership through the National Mental Health Leaders Project in 2014.

Participants:

• Sebastian Robertson (NSW)
• Michael Burge (QLD)
• Lyn Mahboub (WA)
• Jen Coulls (SA)
• Dean Barton-Smith (VIC)
• Sarah McFarlane-Eagle (NSW)
• Rebecca Randall (ACT)
• Lei Ning (VIC)
• Rod McKay (NSW)
• Fay Jackson (NSW)
• Julie Anderson (VIC)

For more information about the National Mental Health Leaders visit www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/our-work/national-mental-health-leaders-project.aspx