

Mental Health & Human Rights in Victoria: Creative Ways Forward to Promote the Rights of People with a Mental Illness

7 September 2010

Karstens at CG, Level 3, 123 Queen St, Melbourne

AGENDA

10.00- 10.10am Welcome to Country and introduction of keynote speaker

10.15-10.55am Keynote address

Mary O'Hagan

Leading international expert in the field of mental health recovery based services (*biography provided overleaf*)

11.00-11.05am Introduction of Chair & and panel members

(*Please see overleaf for Chair & Panellist biographies*)

Chair

Phil Lynch, Director, Human Rights Law Resource Centre

Panellists

Sophie Delaney, Lawyer, Civil Law Services Victorian Legal Aid

Vrinda Edan, Director, Consumer & Carer Relations, Southern Health

Judy Hamann, General Manager, Victorian Operations, Mind Australia

Professor Jayashri Kulkarni, Professor of Psychology of Psychiatry, Alfred & Monash University

11.05-11.40am Panel discussion - four questions

11.40am-12pm Participant questions.

12- 12.30pm Close and lunch



Mental Health Legal Centre



Psychiatric Disability Services
of Victoria (VICSERV)



Mary O'Hagan – Bio

Mary O'Hagan experienced severe mental health problems and used mental health services for several years as a young woman. She slowly realised that, like her, many people were not helped or understood in the mental health system and some were deeply harmed by it. Society, in collusion with the mental health system, had also failed to uphold the rights and participation of some of its most marginalised citizens. In response to this, Mary initiated the user/survivor movement in New Zealand in the mid 1980s.

From 1991 to 1995 she was the first chair of the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry. Mary was a mental health commissioner in New Zealand between 2000 and 2007. She is now an international consultant in mental health. Over the last two decades she has occupied many roles in many types of agencies, always with an overriding commitment to promote service user expectations of services as well as their full participation in society.

Chair – Phil Lynch, Executive Director, Human Rights Law Resource Centre

Phil Lynch has been Executive Director and Principal Solicitor of the Human Rights Law Resource Centre since 2006. The HRLRC is a leading national community legal centre dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights in Australia. Phil was previously the founding Coordinator of the PILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic which, in 2005, was conferred with the Australian Human Rights Law Award. Phil has also worked with Allens Arthur Robinson. Phil is on the Editorial Board of the *Alternative Law Journal*, an appointee to the Federal Government's Human Rights Grants Scheme Expert Panel, and a member of the Victorian Attorney-General's Human Rights Leadership Forum.



Mental Health Legal Centre



Psychiatric Disability Services
of Victoria (VICSERV)



Panelists – Bios

Sophie Delaney, Lawyer, Civil Law Services, Victorian Legal Aid

Sophie has worked at the Centre for 12 years as a policy worker, legal caseworker and co-ordinator. She has published major articles in relation to Victoria's Mental Health Act and the United Nations Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and Improvement of Mental Health Care, and on an optimally rights recognising mental health review tribunal. She was on the Disability Discrimination Legal Service Committee of Management for many years, is the Federation of Community Legal Centres representative on the Human Rights Law Resource Centre Advisory Committee and is a member of the Law Institute of Victoria's Disability Law Committee.

Vrinda Edan, Director, Consumer and Carer Relations, Southern Health

Vrinda has been employed in the mental health consumer movement for over 10 years and been involved in local, state and national committees and projects. Vrinda is passionate about helping Mental Health Workers to understand the impact that service use has on the person, particularly in providing opportunities for the clinician to hear directly from consumers about their experiences and how it can influence change in practice.

Professor Jayashri Kulkarni, Professor of Psychiatry, The Alfred and Monash University

Professor Kulkarni became a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists in 1989. She was appointed as the first Associate Professor/Director of Psychiatry to Dandenong Hospital, Department of Psychiatry in 1994. She founded and directed the Dandenong Psychiatry Research Centre (DPRC) and the Monash University Research Centre for Women's Mental Health. She commenced her appointment as Professor of Psychiatry, The Alfred and Monash University in 2002.

She directs a large psychiatric research group, the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre (MAPrc), which has a team of over 100 staff and post-graduate students from medicine, nursing, psychology, allied health, science, and health information services. Funding for this group comes from a number of national and international project grants plus industry collaboration.

Judy Hamann, General Manager, Victorian Operations – MIND Australia



Mental Health Legal Centre



Psychiatric Disability Services
of Victoria (VICSERV)



Community sector survey

– Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

VCOSS is undertaking this survey as a follow-up to its 2008 report, *Using the Charter in Policy and Practice*. This report examined the changes that had been made by community sector organisations to incorporate the Charter - and human rights principles more broadly - into organisational policies, procedures or service delivery. It included substantial appendices providing examples from the organisations surveyed including a Project Plan, a Human Rights Committee's Terms of Reference, a Watching Brief, and examples of revised policies. The 2008 report is available on the VCOSS website: www.vcross.org.au

The intention of this survey is to document the further changes made by community sector organisations to incorporate the Charter into organisational policies, procedures and/or service delivery. The survey results will be compiled into a follow-up report to be published later in 2010.

BACKGROUND

It has been four years since the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) was introduced, and it is due for review in 2011. The Charter includes many universal rights contained in international human rights treaties ratified by Australia and requires Government and public authorities to observe human rights when making laws and providing services.

VCOSS has been actively involved in the development and implementation of the Charter, from conducting consultations around its introduction to advocacy, training of community sector workers and advocates, education and publications and a report on the ways in which community sector organisations are using the Charter in policy and practice.

In order to ensure that the experiences of community sector organisations are included in the review, VCOSS is documenting community sector views and experiences of the Charter and human rights through four human rights forums and a survey. The findings from the survey and forums will be compiled in a final report to the Department of Justice in late 2010.

SURVEY

Please take the time to fill out the attached survey – your input is greatly appreciated!

If you would prefer to provide feedback verbally regarding your organisation's experience of the Charter and its impact on organisational policy, practice and/or service delivery, please contact Christiane Gurner, Human Rights Officer at VCOSS –

T: 03 9654 5050

E: christiane.gurner@vcross.org.au.

Thank you for your participation.



Mental Health Legal Centre



Psychiatric Disability Services
of Victoria (VICSERV)

