



Paper 3 (Working Draft): January 2007

Ensuring a Skilled, Motivated  
and Effective Workforce in the  
**Community Mental Health  
Service Sector** (non-government)

**Paper 3** in a Series of Papers to  
develop the sector in South Australia  
to better meet the needs of people  
with a mental illness





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## Introduction

**This is Paper 3 of a Series of five Papers being drafted by the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia in partnership with the organisations that comprise the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government).**

This Series of Papers describes the non-government Community Mental Health Service Sector in South Australia, with a focus on how services can be further developed to better meet the needs of the community. All Papers are being developed based on information collected from the sector with the final versions shaped by consultation and feedback.

This Paper outlines the key directions and actions required to ensure that we have a skilled, motivated and effective workforce in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) to deliver future recovery and consumer-orientated mental health services. Because workforce development requires a whole system approach, this Paper focuses on recruitment and retention, leadership and management, organisational culture as well as education and training.

While each Paper is a stand alone document it is highly recommended that all Papers be read in order to better understand the overall complexity of issues currently facing the sector in South Australia in supporting people with a mental illness and their families.

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Executive Director  
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November 2006



## Framework & Recommendations

The fundamental goal of workforce development in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) is to ensure that the sector has a skilled, motivated and effective workforce to meet the needs of consumers and carers in a recovery-focused mental health system. A substantial emphasis on workforce development in the sector will be essential to achieving mental health reform.

The recent expansion of our sector has attracted a significant number of new workers into the mental health field. The profile of this workforce reflects values, skills and experiences that promote a recovery oriented approach to service delivery. Despite the recent growth and positive outlook, however, there remains a wide range of issues that need a pro-active approach to ensure that the non-government sector is able to sustain the development and retention of a skilled and motivated workforce that will enable the needs of the community to be effectively met.

To achieve this there must be a “whole-system approach” to workforce development. This means that we need the commitment of Government to implement a long-term strategy in partnership with the Mental Health Coalition of SA that focuses not only on education and training but also importantly recruitment and retention, leadership and management and organisational culture.

The framework for developing the workforce is diagrammatically represented below.

Framework for developing the workforce of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) Workforce Development - A Long Term Strategy



The framework identifies five Strategic Requirements as key priority areas to further develop the workforce in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government). They are:

- Workforce development - a long term strategy;
- Organisational development;
- Recruitment and retention;
- Training and development; and
- Research and evaluation.

Recommendations within each Strategic Requirement are outlined below. Further information is contained in the section titled *Workforce Development - 5 Strategic Requirements*.

## Workforce Development - A Long Term Strategy

### Recommendation 1

The Department of Health to endorse this paper as the strategic direction for the development of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) workforce.

The Department of Health to take the lead agency role across government in coordinating the resource commitment of Government and defining the roles and expectations of the various stakeholders undertaking workforce development activities, including the development of key performance indicators.

As a key partner and the industry peak body, the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia to implement the strategies contained in the section titled **Workforce Development - a Long Term Strategy** which include:

- promoting the sector as a preferred place of employment;
- developing and coordinating effective and appropriate responses to deliver targeted accredited training; and
- undertaking research and evaluation activities to better understand the workforce and the impact of workforce initiatives.

## Organisational Development

### Recommendation 2

The Mental Health Coalition of South Australia to take the lead role in supporting the sector to focus on organisational development improvement. The specific strategies are outlined in the section titled **Organisational Development** and include:

- supporting engagement with quality improvement initiatives such as adoption of the Service Excellence Framework and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Support Services Standards;

- supporting capacity building activities and coordinating opportunities to improve leadership, management and team building skills within the sector; and
- developing partnerships across organisations and other sectors.

## Recruitment And Retention

### Recommendation 3

Subject to the outcome of the SA Health and Community Services Skills Board project the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia to ensure that the sector has best-practice policies and management tools in place to enable them to attract and retain staff and to promote the non-government mental health system as an attractive career option for university students, adults and current health and support service providers.

### Recommendation 4

The Department of Health, as the lead agency, to work with the sector to improve wages and conditions across the sector to:

- gain consistency across similar workers within the sector;
- reflect skills, qualifications and experience; and
- make wages and conditions comparative with the government sector.

### Recommendation 5

Departments that fund support programs for people with mental illness and/or their carers to ensure that the funding mechanisms allow for capacity of the contracted organisations to engage in workforce development activities.

### Recommendation 6

The Department of Health to provide funding to employ Volunteer Co-ordinators in the sector to ensure appropriate recruitment, training, support and retention of volunteers.

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## Training And Development

### Recommendation 7

The Mental Health Coalition of South Australia to work with the sector to implement the strategies outlined in the section titled **Training and Development**. These strategies include:

- continuing and expanding the delivery of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Training to workers in the sector;
- delivering introductory mental health training to hands-on workers in other sectors (eg youth, alcohol and other drugs, aged); and
- ensuring that training is affordable for the sector and that funding for backfill is available.
- undertaking regular training needs analysis of the sector and co-coordinating the provision of effective training responses; and
- influencing the current curriculum for students and providing input into competency development.

## Research And Evaluation

### Recommendation 8

In collaboration with the sector the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia to:

- undertake research and evaluation activities to accurately describe the workforce and to monitor workforce trends;
- identify opportunities to increase the productivity and efficiency of the sector;
- establish and implement a research and evaluation agenda for workforce development; and
- implement other strategies as outlined in the section titled **Research and Evaluation**.



## Series of Papers

The Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) is defined as those organisations that are not-for-profit and provide a broad range of community-based services for people impacted on and affected by mental illness (including consumers, carers and family members of all ages).

A list of the organisations currently comprising the sector is at ATTACHMENT 1.

This Series of Papers describe the important role and contribution that the sector makes to the mental health system and how services can be further developed to better support people with a mental illness and their families.

**The five Papers in this Series are outlined below.**

**Paper 1 The Role, Strengths and Functions of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government)** November 2006.

This Paper describes the important role of the sector, its capabilities and key functions.

**Paper 2 The Current Profile of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government)** November 2006.

This Paper provides a profile of the sector highlighting the contribution that the sector is presently making to the mental health system. This Paper will be a web-based document, which will enable individual organisations to update their profile as required.

**Paper 3 Ensuring a Skilled, Motivated and Effective Workforce in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government).** November 2006.

This Paper is a draft working document and outlines a range of strategies that need to be put in place to successfully develop the workforce in the sector. The Paper will be updated from time to time as more information becomes available, such as the current work of the SA Health and Community Services Skills Board in workforce and skill development in the non-government/non acute care area.

**Paper 4 Issues, Gaps and Strategies to Improve Access to the services provided by the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government)** November 2006.

This Paper identifies solutions and strategies to address the gaps in the sector and ways to strengthen the capacity of the sector to better support people with mental illness and their families.

**Paper 5 Measuring Outcomes Across the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government)** December 2006.

This Paper describes the core key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the services delivered by the sector.

All Papers will be available on the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia (MHCSA) website at [www.mhcsa.org.au](http://www.mhcsa.org.au)



## Principles for the Development of the Community Mental Health Services Sector (non-government)

**In developing the Series of Papers the following principles were identified to guide the documents and the strategies for action.**

### **Recovery-focus**

The Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) supports the development of an integrated recovery-focused system where the goal of services is to support people with mental illness to fully exercise their rights of citizenship.

### **Consumer and Carer Roles**

The sector supports the increasing recognition of the many roles of consumers and carers of all ages within our mental health system. The roles include employment as peer workers or carer consultants as well as paid or unpaid work with mutual support or self-help groups, as community educators, systems advocates or as representatives on advisory and management groups.

### **People with special needs**

The sector acknowledges that there are many population groups within the mental health consumer/ carer population that have specific needs. These include people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people living in rural and remote areas, young carers/ family members (including young children) and older people. There is also acknowledgement of the gender differences between men and women and the need to reflect these differences in the planning and delivery of services.

### **National Standards for Mental Health Services**

The National Standards for Mental Health Services and the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Support Services Standards (in development) are supported as a sound basis to develop services that are consumer-focused.

### **Measuring Effectiveness and Quality**

The sector supports the development of measures that show effectiveness of services in achieving the outcomes of a recovery-focused system, including quality of the interaction with consumers and/or family members, use of evidence-based best practice and cost-effectiveness.

### **Workforce Development and Training**

The sector supports ongoing investment in recruitment, retention, training and other workforce development activities that underpin effective service delivery and the use of evidence-based best practice.



## Important Role of the Community Mental Health Services Sector (non-government) within a Recovery Framework

Paper 1 in this Series of Papers identified the role of the Community Mental Health Service Support Sector (non-government) as follows:

**The role of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) is to provide a range of recovery-oriented services that support people with mental illness and their families. These services complement the work of the Public Mental Health Sector, GPs, other parts of the health system and other sectors outside the health system, such as housing and employment. The Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) also has an important role in raising community awareness through mental health promotion and prevention activities.**

The recovery-oriented services provided by the sector include the provision of psychosocial rehabilitation and psychiatric disability community support services.

Within its role the sector has particular strengths and capacities (both existing and potential) and it is the combination of these elements that provides the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) with its uniqueness within the overall mental health system.

Paper 1 stressed the importance of a strong and respectful relationship between the public mental health system and the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) with acknowledgement that each sector plays a unique and vital role in the delivery of mental health services. It also stated that an effective mental health system can only be achieved through strong links and partnerships between the various sectors involved in the provision of services for people with a mental illness, including General Practice, housing services,

employment services and other parts of the health system, eg private providers.

The Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) is committed to and works within a recovery framework. This is in recognition of the evidence that people with mental illness can "recover", ie manage their illness in such a way as to lead full and active lives in the community, despite the continuing or long-term presence of the illness.

A key aspect of the recovery approach is that each person's journey of recovery is a personal process and will be unique to them. The goal of service providers in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) is to work with and support people with mental illness to self-manage their illness and be active in their own recovery. This means that there is a strong emphasis on supporting people to access appropriate housing and achieve their education, employment, social, recreational and other goals.



## Current Workforce in the Community Mental Health Services Support Sector (non-government)

People in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) work in a wide variety of roles, and include:

- Managers
- Administrators
- Social Workers
- Counsellors
- Planners and Project Officers
- Coordinators
- Volunteers (in various generic and specific roles)
- Peer Workers, Peer Specialists
- Consumer and Carer Consultants
- Support Workers
- Group Facilitators
- Fieldworkers
- Educators and trainers

Information on the number of people working in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) and workforce trends is not yet known. However, the SA Health and Community Services Skills Board is currently undertaking a one-off collection, which will provide a useful baseline to start this process. One of the recommendations in this Paper is to improve workforce information and it is proposed that the MHCSA conduct an annual survey to accurately describe the workforce and to monitor workforce trends. See the section called [Research and Evaluation](#).

### Current Funding and Workforce Activities in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government)

Currently, there is no on-going funding for workforce development for the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government). The MHCSA received one-off funding (until 30 June 2007) from the Department of Health to assist organisations to undertake a range of workforce development strategies and activities. In 2005, the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry received one-off funding also from the Department of Health to establish the SA Mental Health Training Centre.

The SA Health and Community Services Skills Board is undertaking an 18-month project with one-off funding to undertake a project to design, establish, implement and evaluate tools to increase the availability of a skilled workforce in the non-government non acute area of mental health to meet immediate and future needs of the community .

A summary of activities in mental health workforce development in the non-government sector is outlined below.

### Mental Health Coalition of SA

The MHCSA has 22 organisational members ranging from large organizations to very small organizations (less than one full-time worker). The MHCSA works closely with other State/Territory peak bodies and with the Mental Health Council of Australia to identify initiatives that could be introduced in South Australia to improve the non-government Community Mental Health Service Sector, including workforce development.

A Training Needs Analysis undertaken in 2005 identified a variety of training gaps across the non-government sector and since that time the Coalition has supported workers in the sector to access a wide range of training courses and workshops.

For the first time in South Australia a group of experienced workers and managers from the sector have been supported to undertake the Cert IV Training and Assessment qualification (TAA04). This initiative builds the sectors capacity to deliver accredited training, against the national framework, and for the competencies of the existing workforce to be recognised. The group of trainers will be qualified to deliver Psychosocial Rehabilitation Training Program. This training was developed by VICSERV Inc and has been mapped against the Cert IV Non-Clinical Mental Health, and is highly regarded as practical training for frontline workers in the sector.

Since February 2005, the MHCSA has been actively involved in the promotion and support of the Service Excellence Framework, a quality management model developed as a shared initiative between the Department of Families and Communities and the Department of Health. The MHCSA's smaller member organisations have been participating in self assessment and gap closure activities with the support of a project officer for the past 12 months.

Through the MHCSA's training and quality initiatives, staff, consumers and carers across the sector have attended approximately 500 days of training to address a variety of identified needs.

The Coalition has also had a specific focus on supporting the smaller organizations in the sector through access to training opportunities and identifying ways that they can work together more effectively through sharing resources.

### **SA Mental Health Training Centre**

The SA Mental Health Training Centre provides staff development opportunities mainly for the clinical government workforce but also a few courses relevant to the non-government sector, such as workshops regarding the Camberwell Assessment of Need, Partnerships in Mental Health Rehabilitation and Consumer and Carer Advocacy. Most of the training offered to the clinical sector is at no cost, however a fee is charged on a cost recovery basis for many of the workshops on offer to the non-government sector.

### **SA Health and Community Services Skills Board**

The SA Health and Community Service Skills Board is currently developing a draft report focusing on the non-government mental health workforce in South Australia.

Twenty-three organisations funded by the Department of Health to deliver non-clinical mental health services were consulted.

The process included a literature review and a review of existing data. In addition, surveys were undertaken with workers, service managers and other key stakeholders in the mental health sector. The surveys did not include organisations outside the sector whose client group includes people with mental illness—eg youth services, aged care, disability and housing sectors.

Preliminary information indicates the following trends:

- The recent workforce expansion of the non-government Community Mental Health Service Sector was met by recruitment mostly from outside the mental health system with only a relatively small number of workers moving from government to non-government organizations.
- The current workforce is relatively well trained with approximately 40% of all staff surveyed having tertiary qualification and just under half having a qualification specifically related to mental health.
- The reported profile of the workforce is relatively young and motivated with the average age around 35-40 years. Seventy percent of new recruits reported that their reasons for moving into the sector were an interest in social justice and/or mental health.
- Over half of the people surveyed indicated that the initial on-the-job training that they received was not adequate. This correlates with the MHCSA needs analysis and the Coalition's current work to develop appropriate training for mental health support workers in South Australia.

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In addition, survey respondents indicated satisfaction with organisational culture, flexible hours and quality of supervision thus confirming that prospects for staff retention within the sector are good.

### **Quality Management Services**

In 2005 the Mental Health Unit of the Department of Health commissioned Quality Management Services (QMS) to develop standards for psychosocial rehabilitation support services in South Australia. The Psychosocial Rehabilitation Support Services (PRSS) Standards are aimed at the range of services that provide community support services for people with a mental illness including their families and carers in South Australia. The standards provide a framework for mental health service providers as they continue to work towards an integrated mental health partnership model in South Australia. Following trial and feedback, the standards are scheduled for implementation in early 2007.

The Service Excellence Framework that the MHCSA is currently rolling out across the Mental Health Community Services Sector (non-government) and the PRSS Standards are complementary and will provide organisations with a comprehensive framework of continuous improvement to strengthen capability to achieve better outcomes for consumers and the community. It is proposed that the MHCSA roll out the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Support Service standards in 2007. See the Section called [Organisational Development](#).



## Workforce Development - 5 Strategic Requirements

The fundamental goal of workforce development in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) is to ensure that the sector has a skilled, motivated and effective workforce to meet the needs of consumers and carers of the mental health system.

To achieve this there must be a “whole-system approach” to workforce development. This means that we need to focus not only on workforce planning, training and education but also recruitment and retention, leadership and management and organisational culture. That is, all the factors that influence the entry and exit of staff to and from the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) and across the sector.

The Mental Health Coalition of SA, as the peak body, has built the links with the sector to most effectively drive workforce development activities that ensure the industry is supported to deliver high quality, effective and efficient services. Government funding models also need to ensure that individual organisations have the capacity to focus on workforce development opportunities.

Five Strategic Requirements have been identified as key priority areas to further develop the workforce in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government). They are:

1. **Workforce development - a long term strategy;**
2. **Organisational development;**
3. **Recruitment and retention;**
4. **Training and development; and**
5. **Research and evaluation.**

### Workforce Development - a Long Term Strategy

Developing the workforce in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) on an ongoing basis is critical to supporting the sector to effectively contribute to mental health reform in South Australia. Individual organisations need the capacity to engage in workforce development activities, however, this needs to be undertaken in a strategic way to ensure that the whole sector can:

- Meet appropriate quality standards and continue to focus on system improvement;
- Attract students, graduates and other adults to work in the industry;
- Retain people in the sector; and
- Develop and retain a well-trained workforce with career path structures that recognise the qualifications and experience of workers.

As previously mentioned, while there is currently some one-off activity in relation to developing the workforce in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government), there is no recurrent funding for ongoing workforce development. This means that there is no sustained or systemic approach to workforce development for the non-government sector in South Australia.

This Strategic Requirement focuses on systems change at the higher level and requires the Department of Health to take a lead agency role across Government in co-ordinating the:

- Resource commitment of Government;
- Roles and expectations of the various stakeholders undertaking workforce development activities; and
- A range of State key performance indicators for mental health workforce development in the non-government sector.

In addition, we must ensure effective communication, networking, co-ordination and collaboration across the various stakeholders. This includes strengthening partnerships between the Commonwealth/State levels and across a range of different sectors (eg housing, youth services, disability and education).

As a key partner and industry peak body the MHCSA is best placed to:

- Promote the sector as a preferred place of employment.
- Work with the sector to identify their workforce development needs.
- Develop and/or co-ordinate effective and appropriate responses to deliver targeted accredited training.
- Deliver skills development opportunities to workers in other sectors whose target population includes people with a mental illness, for example, youth, housing and local government.
- Develop relationships and partnerships with other sectors to build workforce development opportunities eg with providers of higher education to facilitate student placements.
- Co-ordinate and promote workforce development activities across the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government), including collecting and undertaking trend analysis to better understand the workforce and identifying and promoting the competency requirements of workers.

### Organisational Development

Organisational development is one of the most important Strategic Requirements if the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) sector is to effectively develop its workforce for the future. This Strategic Requirement is strongly linked to recruitment and retention, in that staff achievements, training and career guidance and personal development are all factors that attract staff to work in an organisation.

Organisational culture, leadership and management are all essential elements of an effective organisation. In addition, it is important to support the promotion of a sustainable and innovative sector through a continuous quality improvement approach that develops a strongly embedded culture of learning and growth.

A wide range of strategies are required to ensure that every organisation in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) has the capacity to develop the organisational culture and systems necessary to sustain their workforce.

These strategies will be most successfully implemented by the MHCSA, which has a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the sector, a good working relationship with each organisation within the sector and an understanding of the Commonwealth and State Governments mental health reform agenda. The following strategies have been identified:

- Continue to support organisations to achieve accreditation in quality management systems (eg the Service Excellence Framework)
- Roll out the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Support Services Standards across the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government);
- Continue to encourage opportunities for improvement that build the capacity of organisations.
- Introduce other continuous improvement models at the organisational level that will support the further development of the sector, such as the “Learning Organisation” and “Lean Thinking” models.
- Support Boards and Managers to develop their leadership skills.
- Encourage organisations in the sector to maintain positive organisational culture by sharing expertise and successful outcomes for consumers through regular forums and workshops designed to inform and provide debate on significant issues.

- Establish Professional Development Forums for Managers in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government).
- Promote a Project Management model of operation across the sector for the implementation of new initiatives or changes in organisational procedures; and
- Offer opportunities to enhance team building and partnership development within and across organisations and sectors.

### Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting and retaining human resources is a key challenge for every organisation in the health system. As previously mentioned, recruitment is closely linked to organisational culture, however wages and working conditions is also an essential element. While the retention of staff in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) has been good over recent years, this will change as the workforce ages and if wages and working conditions are not improved.

It is recognised that the SA Health and Community Services Skills Board is currently undertaking a project to identify ways to increase the availability of a skilled workforce in the non-government non acute area of mental health to meet immediate and future needs of the community. The MHCSA is on the Steering Committee for this project to ensure that the workforce issues of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) are represented.

The MHCSA expects that it will have a major role in implementing many of the findings of the SA Health and Community Services Skills Board. Without preempting the outcome of the project there is no doubt that strategies will need to be put in place to:

- Ensure that the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) has best-practice policies and management tools in place to enable them to attract and retain staff.

- Promote the non-government mental health system as an attractive career option for university students, adults and current health and support service providers.
- Improve wages and conditions across the sector to gain consistency across similar workers within the sector and to make wages and conditions comparative with the government sector.

The role of good supervision cannot be overstated and is extremely important in relation to staff retention. It is vital that the sector has access to appropriate training in this area.

In addition, the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) workforce includes hundreds of people who volunteer their time to support the many activities provided by the sector many of whom are consumers or carers. For example, in 2004/05 volunteers provided 62% of the hours worked at the Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia. In most organisations this is the only way that they meet their funding and service requirements. A culture of volunteerism also supports increased consumer and carer participation, connection to community, community ownership and inclusion.

As a result workforce development strategies must include recruiting, training, supervising and supporting volunteers in the sector. There are currently no Volunteer Coordinators in the sector to ensure the appropriate recruitment, training, support and retention of volunteers and this needs to be addressed.

### Training and Development

Training and development includes all aspects of education and training and is focused on developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of people who work in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government). An appropriately skilled workforce will be essential to achieving mental health reform and to further develop the sector.

The Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) workforce needs increased access to

appropriate education and training opportunities. This needs to be done in an efficient way ensuring that there is no duplication. There is also a growing need for appropriate cross sector training to expand the education and training opportunities for staff that work with people with mental illness eg youth services, drug and alcohol services, community housing and Local Government. At the same time, we must ensure that training and education is co-ordinated with work in the wider health, education and employment sectors.

The Coalition has established an effective training program that is firstly, based on identifying the training needs across the sector and secondly, utilises a brokerage arrangement to facilitate access to the most appropriate training programs through existing providers. Where programs do not currently exist the Coalition has sourced programs from interstate and developed local capacity to deliver the programs in South Australia eg the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Training Program for frontline workers developed by VICSERV Inc.

Other training opportunities have been provided with curriculum provided via MHCSA members who are also Registered Training Organisations. In this way, training funds are used in a cost-effective manner to provide access to existing training in order to avoid, where possible, the expense of developing curriculum. In addition, training that is “accredited” was an important factor identified in the 2005 Training Needs Analysis and this has been offered where achievable.

The cost of training and the lack of resources to backfill staff to attend training are two of the most important issues for the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) and must be addressed as a priority. For example, the Department of Human Services in Victoria provides funding for the backfill of staff enrolled in training through VICSERV.

Currently there is a very limited career path within the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government). As training opportunities become more widely available across the sector career pathways will be enhanced. Progression through the Certificate level

qualifications through to Diploma in Mental Health and beyond will build an achievable and motivating pathway for workers.

Partnerships and cross linkages with higher education providers are important to ensure input into curriculum and increase training opportunities for the sector. The pursuit of appropriate partnerships such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (SA) and the MHCSA enables an effective exchange of information. Fostering links through formal partnerships with other organisations will be an important aspect of developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the mental health system as a whole.

A number of strategies are required to ensure that the training and development needs of staff working in the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) can be met. These strategies would be most effectively implemented by the MHCSA, in consultation with the sector, and include:

- Continue to deliver the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Training Modules (currently under license from VICSERV) using SA based trainers. (Funding for this training will be expended by June 07).
- Further develop local capacity to deliver additional Psychosocial Rehabilitation Training Modules to complete Certificate IV.
- Deliver (and refine curriculum based on feedback) introductory mental health training to front-line workers in other sectors (eg youth, alcohol and other drugs, aged) whose client group includes people with mental illness.
- Support organisations seeking access to accredited training (including traineeship funding) via the VET system.
- Identify opportunities for affordable access to training for workers, consumers and carers eg via subsidies or scholarships.
- Providing funding to backfill staff attending training.

- Regularly undertake training needs analysis of the sector and co-ordinate the provision of effective training responses.
- Develop partnerships with the higher education sector to influence the current curriculum for students of Psychiatry, Social Work, Psychology, Behavioural Sciences and Human Services.
- Provide input into competency development in the ongoing review process of the accredited training offered within the VET system. Work with the sector to identify common required competencies across the various roles in the sector that can be linked to Job Descriptions and the identification of training needs for staff.
- Facilitate access to training in leadership, supervision and mentoring.

### Research and Evaluation

There is currently no recurrent funding for researching and evaluating aspects of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) workforce. This is the final Strategic Requirement and must be implemented if we are to better understand the current workforce and influence the future impact of workforce development initiatives.

The Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) will need to continually find ways of working better and more efficiently to meet future demand for services with the available workforce. Data on the sector's workforce needs to be collected and analysed on an annual basis to describe the workforce accurately and to monitor workforce trends, including the satisfaction of workers.

Ongoing research is needed to investigate aspects of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) to add to the knowledge and understanding of the workforce and the impact of workforce development initiatives. Assessing the effectiveness of initiatives and projects through evaluations will contribute to a best practice evidence base in workforce development.

A number of strategies are required to ensure that the workforce can be further developed in the sector effectively. The sector considers that these initiatives would be best implemented by the MHCSA. The strategies are outlined below.

- Undertake an annual workforce data collection to accurately describe the workforce and to monitor workforce trends.
- Conduct annual staff satisfaction surveys across the sector.
- Develop a Workforce Development Planning Guide for all organisations within the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government);
- Identify opportunities to increase the productivity and efficiency of the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government) workforce;
- Establish and implement a research and evaluation agenda for workforce development in the sector.



## Attachment 1 Organisations Comprising the Community Mental Health Service Sector (non-government)

Anglicare SA Inc	Neami Ltd
Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill Inc	Obsessive Compulsive Disorders Support Services Inc
Baptist Community Services (SA) Inc	Panic Anxiety Disorder Association Inc
Carers SA	Richmond Fellowship of SA
Catherine House Inc	Roofs Housing Association
Centacare Catholic Family Services	Royal District Nursing Service of SA Inc
COMIC - Children of Mentally Ill Consumers	SHARE - Self Help Addiction
Clubhouse SA Inc	Southern Cross Care (SA) Inc
Eating Disorders Association of SA Inc	STTARS - Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance Inc
GROW SA	UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc
Helping Hand Aged Care	UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide Inc
Isolated Persons Project of Norwood	
Life Without Barriers	
Mental Illness Fellowship of SA Inc	



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