



# NEWSLETTER

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**MHCA Newsletter is published by:**

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**MHCA CEO:**

Mr John Mendoza

## In this issue:

- **CEO's Report**

Well there's nothing like a media storm within my first week of joining the Council. It certainly helps focus the mind! The tragic case of Australian Cornelia Rau has hit a few raw nerves in the Australian community it seems. The Council has endeavoured to draw attention to the issues surrounding the provision of mental health services to all Australians. Regrettably, case stories similar to Ms Rau's case are all too familiar. The mental health and human rights community consultations have pointed to a nation-wide problem. Solving the problem of disconnected missing persons databases would appear to be a relatively simple task. However it is hard to see at this point how a six-week inquiry to be conducted by former AFP Commissioner, Mick Palmer, will identify the systemic mental health issues and propose effective solutions.

I will continue to ensure we represent the sector's concerns and interests in the ensuing inquiry and public debate.

Amongst this, I have begun an extensive round of meetings with Council members and stakeholders. I appreciate the time people have afforded me. Coming to grips with the sector issues and initiatives is one important outcome for me from these meetings. I also am using the opportunity to outline some of the priorities for the Secretariat for the coming year.

One key priority is the review of the Council Board structure. We have appointed Albany Consulting to undertake the task with us. The principal consultant Martin Stewart-Weeks brings considerable experience in working with the NGO sector on governance issues. Over coming months Martin and his team will be consulting with all members – be it through face-to-face meetings, small group meetings or teleconferences. I encourage you to be frank and fearless in putting forward views on how we can create a structure for the Council’s future effectiveness.

Finally thank you to all who have made me welcome to the Council. Neil and the rest of the team have made my ‘induction’ a smooth and trouble-free process. I also want to thank Grace for efforts in the handover and her continuing contribution to the finalization of the MHCA-HREOC report.

- **Upcoming Events**

### **Mental Health ACT**



## **Mental Health ACT**

### **“Black Tie Ball”**

Venue: **Royal Theatre,**  
National Convention Centre.

Band: **“Big Boss Groove”**

Date: **Saturday 5th March 2005**

Cost: **\$75 per head** includes 3-course dinner.  
Alcohol purchased from the bar.  
Dress : **Black Tie Formal**

*Book your table of 8 or 10 by contacting  
**Kerin O'Brien** on **62051110**  
during business hours or email him at  
**kerin.o'brien@act.gov.au***

All profits to the Canberra Schizophrenia Fellowship.

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**6th International Congress of Neuropsychiatry to be held in  
Sydney, Australia from 10-14 September 2006.**

**SYDNEY CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE  
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
<http://www.inacongress2006.com>**

Sydney, Australia is the venue for the 6<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Neuropsychiatry.

Sydney is without doubt one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It has a reputation for friendly people, a cosmopolitan lifestyle, wonderful shopping and world-class entertainment. Our magnificent harbour, renowned Opera House and sunny beaches combine to make Sydney a unique destination.

The conference and trade exhibition will be held at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour, which is adjacent to the heart of the city. The centre offers first class facilities to delegates, presenters and exhibitors alike. It is the focal point of Darling Harbour which itself is alive with shops, restaurants and visitor attractions.

Register your interest now at the Congress website  
**[www.inacongress2006.com](http://www.inacongress2006.com)**

**Melissa Crowle**  
Conference Coordinator

- **Other**

## **MHCA Staff Update**

The secretariat would like to welcome Susie Newman. Susie started with the MCHA on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2005 on a short term contract to work on the Parkinson's Australia project.

A more detailed on this project will follow in the next newsletter.

## **beyondblue Survey**

Dear Colleagues

We would appreciate your assistance in completing this survey if it is relevant to you.

Many Thanks

Bernard Bernard McNair  
National Co-Ordinator bluevoices  
beyondblue The National Depression Initiative

Do you live in a rural or remote area of Australia? Have you experienced depression or lived with someone with depression?

beyondblue: the national depression initiative is committed to assisting people in rural and remote Australia to a greater level of understanding of depression and looking at ways that services can be improved.

beyondblue would like to hear your ideas on how consumers and carers can deal with the challenges that face people experiencing depression who live in a rural and remote community.

You may have seen some of the fact sheets we have developed on the beyondblue website. beyondblue wants to develop some specific information for people from rural and remote Australia. We particularly want to be able to provide people with advice about how they can effectively deal with and manage depression if they live in a rural or remote area.

Please be assured that all information you provide will be confidential and beyondblue will not reveal either any information that could identify you or your community.

If you would fill in the sections below and email [ruralsurvey@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:ruralsurvey@beyondblue.org.au) <mailto:ruralsurvey@beyondblue.org.au> , we would very much appreciate it.

Many thanks for your time

Kim Webber  
Senior Program Manager (Rural and Indigenous)

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Postcode -

Sex - M / F

Age -

Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person - Y / N

How does stigma impact on you and your family in a rural or remote community?

Can you please tell us some of the other special issues that you face because of living in a rural or remote area?

Can you please tell us some of the approaches that helped you identify and deal with your depression?

How do you think beyondblue can effectively circulate information about depression to people in rural and remote Australia?

Are you happy for beyondblue to email you back if we have any further questions? Y / N

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[ruralsurvey@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:ruralsurvey@beyondblue.org.au) <mailto:ruralsurvey@beyondblue.org.au>  
beyondblue: the national depression initiative

## WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

### **WFMH URGES GLOBAL SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH NGO'S IN COUNTRIES DEVASTATED BY SOUTH ASIA TSUNAMIS: *DONATIONS GIVEN THROUGH WFMH 'DONATE NOW' SITE THROUGH MARCH 31, 2005 COMMITTED TO GRASSROOTS EFFORTS***

**03 January 2005/** L. Patt Franciosi, PhD, President of the Board of Directors of the World Federation for Mental Health, issued a statement today urging financial support for mental health non-governmental organizations located in countries impacted by last week's Indian Ocean tsunamis.

"The world is mobilizing a tremendous campaign to support basic shelter and survival needs of the millions of people in the devastated communities hit by the tsunamis. International health bodies such as the World Health Organization are striving to prevent threats to public health in the aftermath of the death and destruction. At the same time, and usually without media coverage and fanfare, many national and grassroots mental health organizations are beginning to provide emotional support and develop strategies and services to address the immediate and long-term mental health consequences that are certain to impact thousands of individuals and families in the weeks and months ahead."

"WFMH has recently heard from one of its members in Sri Lanka, who reports ***'Sorry for not responding promptly. My family and colleagues are fine, though my eldest brother escaped with a near to death experience. We have started working in the camps (there are about 150 refugee camps in just the southern province) providing emotional support and care. Tomorrow, I am leaving to Hambantota with 28 mental health professionals from Colombo who will attend to the psychosocial needs of the survivors. I'll be involved in training 40 community leaders to prepare them in taking the lead in providing emotional support and mobilization of the survivors, to face the crisis positively. These days I only slept not more than 2 hours a day.'***

"Certainly, the coming weeks and months will bring the greatest challenges, frustrations and heartbreaks many of the grassroots mental health organizations and professionals working in these countries will ever face. WFMH is urging its organization and individual members to do whatever they can to provide encouragement, support and resources that will be of assistance to these organizations – and to the mental health professionals and volunteers who will be working tirelessly to help their fellow citizens cope with the physical hardships and emotional trauma they will be facing as they struggle through this time of crisis."

In an effort to make financial resources available to assist in-country grassroots mental health organizations responding to the mental health consequences of this disaster, the World Federation for Mental Health is encouraging contributions to be made through WFMH's ***"DONATE NOW"*** button on its website – [www.wfmh.org](http://www.wfmh.org).

**All proceeds received through the WFMH "DONATE NOW" account through 31 March 2005 will be placed in a special fund from which small grants will be made to mental health organizations from the countries affected by the disaster that are undertaking specific programs and services to address mental health consequences in the stricken areas.**

WFMH's Secretary General and CEO Preston J. Garrison stated "The natural disaster will create untold mental health consequences – not just for the survivors who live and work in the communities and villages that were in the tsunamis' direct path. Families from around the world also lost loved ones and relatives, and few people who witnessed the death and devastation through television reports will be emotionally unaffected. This is truly a global natural and human disaster. Yet, the major and continuing task to address the disaster's aftermath will fall on volunteers and professionals living and working in the countries. Their jobs will remain the most difficult and most wrenching, long after the television news teams are gone and the world's attention moves to new events and occurrences. Mental health professionals and volunteers, of all the relief workers, have some of the hardest and longest lasting work ahead of them. The global mental health community should do everything possible to support and assist them in that work. WFMH is committed to that end."

***For further information, and to offer ways in which you or your organization can help, contact Deborah Maguire, Director of Programs, World Federation for Mental Health, at [dmaguire@wfmh.com](mailto:dmaguire@wfmh.com).***

The MHCA Newsletter is a forum to provide information to people interested in mental health matters in Australia. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to the Australian mental health sector. Please contact the MHCA on 6285 3100 or [admin@mhca.com.au](mailto:admin@mhca.com.au). Some articles published within the MHCA Newsletter are provided by third parties and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MHCA. [Home](#)