

Information sheet

Mental Health Act 1986 Review

July 2008

Why review the Act?

The Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, announced a review of the *Mental Health Act 1986* on 8 May 2008.

The review will examine whether the Act provides an effective legislative framework for the treatment and care of people with a serious mental illness in Victoria. The review will aim to ensure that the Act appropriately protects human rights in light of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*.

Mental health and mental illness are increasingly vital public issues. Their impact on individuals, families and communities are a major challenge for governments around the world.

The Victorian Government is currently developing a whole of government Mental Health Strategy that is due to be completed by the end of 2008. The review will be informed by the new vision for mental health in Victoria due to be outlined in the Mental Health Strategy report *Because Mental Health Matters* to be published in October 2008.

What you can expect

The Minister has appointed Mr Ben Bodna, AM, Ms Dominique Saunders and Mr Wayne Schwass to the independent Community Consultation Panel (the Panel) to lead public consultations on the review. The Panel will be supported by the legislation review team within the Mental Health and Drugs Division of the Department of Human Services.

The Minister has also established an independent Expert Advisory Group consisting of a range of stakeholders and key experts. The Panel and legislation review team will be advised by the Expert Advisory Group. The Expert Advisory Group is chaired by Mr Julian Gardner, the previous Victorian Public Advocate.

A consultation paper will be released in December 2008 inviting submissions and/or attendance at a number of public forums in February 2009. This consultation will be led by the Panel and will inform the development of a final report and recommendations paper for Minister Neville.

Mr Ben Bodna, AM was Victoria's first Public Advocate between 1986 and 1993. He was a Community Visitor for ten years, was Adjunct Professor of Disability Services at Deakin University, and has served on many community committees relating to people with disabilities.

Ms Dominique Saunders is Corporate Counsel at Western Health, sessional lawyer member of the Mental Health Review Board and a council member of the Law Institute of Victoria. Ms Saunders has worked as an advocate for mental health consumers.

Mr Wayne Schwass played 282 VFL/AFL games for North Melbourne and the Sydney Swans between 1988 and 2002. Mr Schwass' own personal experience with depression was the driving force behind him establishing 'The Sunrise Foundation' to educate young people about depression.

How to have your say

The website will be updated with information on the review process, including the consultation paper, how to make written submissions and the dates and locations of public forums.

Contact us

Call 1300 656 692 or email mhactreview@dhs.vic.gov.au

www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mhactreview

Department of Human Services

