

# Key stakeholder consultation on recommendations for future Victorian surveys of consumer and carer experience of public mental health services

## Introduction

The statewide survey of consumer and carer experience of public mental health services gives consumers and carers the chance to provide feedback to help improve the quality of services in Victoria.

A review of the last survey conducted in 2003-2004 identified opportunities to improve the way information is collected in the survey and how it is used by services, and to facilitate the involvement of consumers and carers in service planning, evaluation and improvement.

## Recommendations for future surveys

A full report of the survey review has been published and is available on <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/quality> or by contacting the Mental Health Branch on ph: 9616 8489.

The Department is considering funding consumer and carer organisations to conduct future surveys. This would involve recruiting, training and supporting a team of consumers and carers to be survey administrators, as well as project staff to coordinate activities and provide relevant expertise and support. The consumer and carer organisations would work with services and the Department to plan and implement the survey, including reporting and using the survey findings for quality improvement.

The surveys would be administered by trained consumers and carers using interviews and focus groups, although written questionnaires asking the same questions would also be available, if preferred, by consumers and carers participating in the survey. In addition, service providers may distribute the written questionnaires at regular intervals with the opportunity to add locally specific questions, to strengthen the survey findings and outcomes.

Partnerships and processes would be further developed to support collaboration and active involvement of consumers, carers, service providers and the Department in the surveys. This would involve establishing a statewide reference group, which is linked with local service reference groups, to bring together the various stakeholders for survey planning, implementation and review. Training in partnership skills and processes would be provided along with information about the survey and how it can be used for continuous quality improvement.

## Consultation with consumers, carers and service providers

The survey review involved consultations with consumers, carers and service providers, and an updated review of national and international developments in this area. Although a survey framework has been identified from the review, it is critical that further consultation is undertaken to define the processes and activities involved and identify implementation issues for all stakeholders.

Your feedback on the survey review and the issues it raises is important for improving the future approach to consumer and carer surveys. The following discussion points may be helpful when considering your views and suggestions:

- How can we encourage consumers and carers to participate in the survey?
- What issues do we need to consider in recruiting, training and supporting consumers and carers to be involved as survey administrators?
- What are the issues in using interviews and focus groups in the survey?
- What are the issues in service providers distributing written questionnaires at regular intervals as part of the survey, including the option to add locally specific questions?
- What is required to support effective partnerships between consumers, carers, service providers and the Department in conducting the survey?
- How can we better use the survey findings to continuously improve the quality of mental health services in Victoria?

Written feedback can be provided up to and including **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005** by email to: [maria.bubnic@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:maria.bubnic@dhs.vic.gov.au) or post to:

Clinical Policy and Standards Unit  
Department of Human Services  
Level 2, 555 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE 3000

Further information about the survey and review can be found at:  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/quality>

## Future consumer and carer surveys

Following this consultation, the approach to future statewide consumer and carer surveys is expected to be finalised by January 2006. Further work will then need to be undertaken to develop the necessary structures, processes and resources to conduct the survey in 2006-2007.