

# Information sheet

*Mental Health Act 1986 Review*

August 2009

## Progress in 2009

### Public consultation

In December 2008 the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, released the **Consultation paper** on the review of the *Mental Health Act 1986* with the aim of stimulating discussion about the Act and encouraging individuals and organisations to lodge submissions. A total of 4000 copies were distributed.

During January and February 2009 the Community Consultation Panel (the Panel) led a series of public consultations in Melbourne and country Victoria. The 14 public forums were attended by 742 people, including consumers, consumers, clinicians and other key stakeholders.

Since consultations commenced there have been 18500 visits to the review webpage. In total 219 submissions were received from a wide range of stakeholders. The consultation process revealed the community's strong desire for a new Act.

### Community consultation report

The **Community consultation report** released in July 2009 was prepared by the Panel and outlines the main ideas and concerns expressed by the community. Two powerful themes were identified by the Panel: the need to protect human rights of people and the need to promote improvements in the health of those who experience serious mental illness.

### Government response to the Community consultation report

Also released in July 2009, the **Government response to the Community consultation report** outlines the Government's reform objectives and notes where further policy development and targeted consultation is required. The Government expressed an intention to update the Act and improve its effectiveness and human rights protections.

Key changes identified by the community and addressed in the **Government response to the Community consultation report** include:

- Modernising the law
- Minimising use of orders and restrictive interventions
- Supported decision making and carer involvement
- Monitoring and promoting care, wellbeing and rights
- Improving responsiveness to specific needs

## Going forward

The legislation review team within the Mental Health and Drugs Division of the Department of Health is currently working with other relevant government agencies, as well as consulting with key stakeholders and experts to finalise advice to the Government to inform the drafting of new legislation. This is critical to ensure that the new Act is practical and effective.

It is anticipated that the Mental Health Bill will be considered by Parliament in 2010.

Details of the terms of reference for the review including the role of the independent Expert Advisory Group and the Community Consultation Panel, as well as any of the reports referred to above, can be found at the review web page <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mhactreview/>. If you have any questions about the review please contact us by calling 1300 656 692 or email [mhactreview@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:mhactreview@dhs.vic.gov.au).