

# Community Consultation Report

## *Mental Health Act 1986 Review*

### **Key points raised by carers at the state-wide carer forum on 29 January 2009** (Approximately 70 participants)

Note the identified 'suggested changes' do not necessarily correlate with 'discussed challenges'. This is consistent with the flow of conversations at the forums. Further, a wide range of opinions were expressed at the forums and the identified 'suggested changes' were not necessarily universally supported.

#### **1. A stronger human rights focus**

Broad issues discussed include: Involuntary treatment as a last resort; non-legal advocates to act on behalf of consumer; regular and timely reviews after admission to hospital; acknowledgement and protection of human rights of carers; information for carers/nominated people about key events such as admissions, discharges, treatment that affects the caring role and electroconvulsive therapy; an independent second psychiatric opinion in cases of disagreement about treatment with the psychiatrist – if there is still no agreement the matter should go before an independent review body.

#### **2. The Act's role in promoting recovery**

Broad issues discussed include: Emphasis on recovery; early intervention before illness becomes acute; holistic (rather than just medical) approaches to recovery; improvements to information sharing across services; collaborative treatment/recovery plans including the involvement of general practitioners; education and training for clinicians on holistic and recovery focused care planning (psycho-social model rather than medical model of planning).

#### **3. Patient participation in decisions about treatment and care**

Broad issues discussed include: Engaging families, carers and other nominated people from the beginning of consumer treatment; nominated person to have legal standing and recognition in legislation; general involvement of the nominated person unless this is not in the best interests of the consumer; the inclusion of advance statements/directives in the legislation; accountability and transparency for clinicians and services.