



MENTAL ILLNESS  
FELLOWSHIP  
of Australia Inc

## **Annual Report 2010-2011**

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## MIFA Board Members and Office Bearers 2010- 2011

|                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hon Rob Knowles AO | President                     |
| Hon Frank Walker   | SFNSW - Vice President        |
| Ken Meissner       | MIFQ – Secretary              |
| Bronwyn Russell    | MHC (ARAFMI) NT - Treasurer   |
| Bob James          | MIFNQ                         |
| Paul Montgomery    | MIF Vic, until September 2011 |
| Steve Wiles        | MIFWA                         |
| Kate Shipway       | ARAFMI Tas                    |
| Marion Croser      | MIFSA                         |
| Wendy Atkins       | MHF ACT, as of September 2011 |

## Our People, Our Activity

|              | FTE Staff    | Members      | Volunteers   | Participants  | Public Education | Helpline Contacts | Budget              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| MIFA         | 2.0          | 8            | n/a          | n/a           | 340              | 260               | \$242,150           |
| SFNSW        | 115          | 1,500        | 520          | 6,953         | 3,891            | 5,033             | \$14,187,719        |
| MIFQ         | 46           | 710          | 154          | 1,083         | 1,127            | 1,803             | \$4,492,135         |
| MIFNQ        | 15           | 112          | 123          | 1,724         | 3,197            | 3,200             | \$1,954,558         |
| MIFSA        | 160          | 1,000        | 150          | 3,442         | 1,111            | 2,200             | \$7,445,344         |
| MHCNT        | 6.5          | 19           | 12           | 396           | 17               | 634               | \$625,000           |
| MIFWA        | 19.5         | 319          | 42           | 1,761         | 60               | 5,700             | \$3,148,956         |
| ARAFMI (TAS) | 1.8          | 1500         | 9            | 305           | 235              | 350               | \$132,000           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>365.8</b> | <b>5,168</b> | <b>1,001</b> | <b>15,664</b> | <b>9,743</b>     | <b>19,180</b>     | <b>\$32,227,862</b> |

## From the President



MIFA has had an exceptional year in terms of both advocacy and service. We have once again proven ourselves to be a reliable source of information about the lived experience of mental illness from the perspective of the whole family and a leading group of service providers for both consumers and carers.

We have continued to speak in support of all people affected by mental illness in meetings with the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing as well as Opposition, Independent and Green politicians, and in discussions with community and industry leaders on the Federal Budget initiatives in policy forums at meetings of the peak mental health body, Mental Health Council of Australia.

We will continue to pursue these opportunities, including our commitment to including people working as peer workers, and those directly experiencing our services in key conversations at a national level wherever possible. Once again, it was the voice of lived experience that made the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Illness events a success. This year the MIFA-led event concentrated on the work of our member organisations in delivering carer education and information programs. Peer educators and participants were given the opportunity to share their experience of the program and its benefits with the audience of elected members and their staff at a breakfast at Parliament House in Canberra.

Following an extensive process of consultation, assisted by an external consultant, MIFA has developed a new comprehensive three year business plan. Its success will rely on the continued high level of commitment from member organisations in supporting four key areas of activity:

- Preparing to deliver the national service guarantee
- Raising our profile as Australia's national provider, focused severe mental illness
- Doubling our current collective income from all sources—to at least \$100 million within three years
- Strengthening MIFA governance

MIFA has met one of its chief goals by recruiting a new member in the Australian Capital Territory. The Mental Health Foundation ACT joined us as of September 2011.

An important step for MIFA has been the preliminary work taken to establish the Psychosis Australia Trust. A national network of researchers—the Australian Psychosis Research Network—has agreed in principle to form a Trust under MIFA, whereby funders, organisations and companies interested in supporting research into persistent mental illness can access a 'one stop shop' to distribute funds to the most appropriate institution or researcher. This is a historic partnership between researchers and the consumer/carer sector in mental health. We believe the Psychosis Australia Trust will help to ensure that research funds find their way to supporting better outcomes for people experiencing mental illness.

During 2011 and 2012, MIFA has committed to focus its activities on bringing attention to the poor physical health of people with severe and persistent mental illness. With this in mind, MIFA conducted a successful Schizophrenia Awareness Week in May of 2011. The spotlight this year was not on an international expert, but on local expertise in the area of physical health, including researchers, service providers, consumers and carers. For the first time, we conducted a national web-based event, centrally located in Sydney, hosted by our member organisation the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW. People were encouraged to join groups in member organisations across Australia or from home. Several hundred people participated on the day, and hundreds more have viewed video of the event available via the MIFA website.

As a flow-on from this event we have re-doubled our activities to support people with mental illness to find solutions to their physical health issues, as well as highlighting the work already underway in member organisations. MIFA was successful in its bid to the Commonwealth to expand a successful smoking cessation program conducted in South Australia to other localities in partnership with our member organisations. This program is now assisting people in Western Australia, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Victoria to reduce their reliance on tobacco.

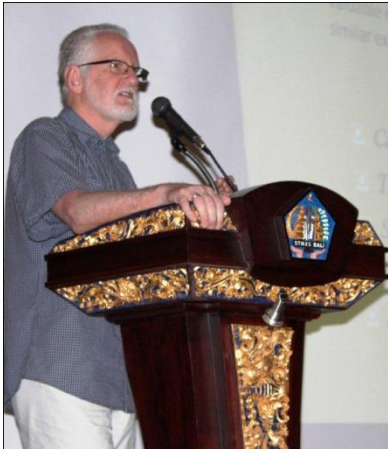
As this year draws to a close, MIFA continues its trajectory as a leading nationwide group of service providers who are committed to the whole of family, peer influenced recovery journeys for people affected by mental illness.

My thanks as always to my fellow Board members, who already give up a great deal of time serving their state and territory member organisations. Your many contributions to MIFA are vital to maintaining our momentum, particularly your advocacy to your own Boards concerning financial and in-kind support of the secretariat.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Knowles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon Rob Knowles AO  
President  
Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia

## From the Executive Director



MIFA has had another successful collaborative year. The development of the new business plan has helped us to focus our activities on developing a sustainable group of member organisations focussed entirely on the support of people affected by severe and persistent mental illness, including their families and friends. Our whole of family, peer influenced approach to services and supports for all people affected by severe mental illness remains the back-bone of our message.

Our member organisations have committed to the Business Plan and have begun working on national initiatives as we develop national funding bids and advocacy opportunities. In keeping with our national perspective, the Board have appointed the President, Hon Rob Knowles as the independent chair of the Board.

National collaborative effort has resulted in the extended roll out of the Tobacco and Mental Illness Project to four localities across Australia. We firmly believe that positioning the organisation as a lead contractor can give the federal government and other funders the opportunity to view MIFA as a group of service providers able to nimbly deliver new initiatives across a wide range of environments.

In preparation to undertake more coordinated national activity, MIFA and its members are reviewing the scope and reach of services so that we may better understand where gaps in services and areas of unmet needs occur within communities. The completion of the MIFA members' Service Map in early 2012 will be an example of our collaborative efforts to ensure a broad ranging understanding of the needs of people affected by mental illness.


We continue to be justifiably proud of our advocacy activities. MIFA has been present at many high level policy forums, meetings with key funders and elected members where the lived experience is an important tool and a key ingredient in the development of new services and opportunities for people affected by severe mental illness. MIFA has participated in the Mental Health Council of Australia policy forums and roundtables, including those where the new Mental Health Commission and the '10 Year Road Map' for mental health have been discussed. We have been fortunate to meet with elected members from all sides of the political divide, as well as their staff and advisors at Parliamentary Friends of Mental Illness, on site visits at member organisations and at electorate and parliamentary offices.

We are very excited by the opportunity to welcome our new member, the Mental Health Foundation ACT and we look forward to supporting them, their Board and staff to make their contribution to our understanding of nationwide issues.

MIFA contributed to the knowledge of the sector on the effects of mental illness with new publications and resources. We successfully completed two literature reviews, one on the physical health of people with mental illness and another on the experiences of adult siblings of people with mental illness, available on the MIFA website. MIFA now has an active YouTube site, increasing our ability to reach more people with news and information, as

well as connecting to organisations, people and elected officials. We have mounted several short videos made from the successful Schizophrenia Awareness Week webinar, where people around Australia joined the discussion on the physical health of people with mental illness, and we also display the successful television community service announcement about the experience of discrimination.

As the Business Plan increasingly propels all the executive leaders of our members into MIFA responsibilities, a new level of collaboration is emerging. Ten per cent of each executive's time is now devoted to national leadership, which is a heavy commitment. This is an exciting point in the story of MIFA, with the biggest challenges yet to come in 2012 and beyond, as we tender as a national group, and deliver the national service guarantee. I am very appreciative of the support of my colleagues across Australia, Susan and June in the secretariat, and the Board of MIFA, knowing that every individual's time is precious.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Meldrum', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Meldrum  
Executive Director  
Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia

## Highlights from our Members



'I cooked my first meal today. I always say I can't. I can't, but the people here supported me and encouraged me and I did it, I achieved something. I can do it at home now, and give my mum a break.' consumer at a respite activity

"What is worse than hearing voices inside your head? Hearing voices behind your back." SAW video (available [www.mifa.org.au](http://www.mifa.org.au))

### Mental Illness Fellowship North Queensland

Firstly I would like to acknowledge the leadership and energy that Andy Froggatt, the CEO during 2010 and 2011, brought to the Fellowship in North Queensland. His efforts, more than capably supported by staff and the management committee, have laid solid foundations for future growth. The year has seen us outgrow our offices in all locations. Our Cairns office now operates out of three suites in the Crangold Business Centre, while in Mackay, we have been able to combine our services under the one roof in a much larger and more suitable building.

During the year there was some progress in ensuring the Cairns Mental Health Carers' Support Hub was financially viable and this work is ongoing in terms of securing a recurrent source of funding. Data from the Carers' Hub indicates that a significant number of people have engaged with the service and it has been well supported by the Champions of the Hub.

In Mackay further work has been occurring around strengthening relationships with the Cairns Regional Mental Health Network and it is anticipated that during the next twelve months there will be further significant developments. The Choir of Unheard Voices continues to perform and is a testament to the growing confidence and skills of its members.

Corporate services and administration staff have ensured that service delivery is well resourced and supported and that MIFNQ remains a vibrant, viable and strong organisation yet retains its underpinning values. Further work has progressed in relation to the new MIFNQ headquarters building with much preparatory work undertaken by the architect and the in principle approval of funds from the Health and Hospitals Fund. The 2011 - 2012 financial year is going to be an exciting year for the building project with completion expected by the end of 2012.

The Federal budget brought down in May 2011 brings the promise of a better deal for people with mental illness, their families and carers and we look forward to more opportunities to strengthen our existing services and bring additional services to our local communities once these Community Mental Health funds have been distributed.

As you will see when you read the various program area reports it has been a very active year for MIFNQ with many people in our communities benefiting from our services. In the bigger picture there has been strong progress in relation to our joint work with the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia, this work will continue with benefits flowing from high level advocacy and the peer support amongst the various state Fellowships.

Of course none of this positive work would happen without the commitment and drive of our staff who continue to bring to the Fellowship their expertise, compassion and energy. Finally I would like to acknowledge the management committee's contribution to MIFNQ and trust that the new committee will continue to uphold the direction and commitment that the Fellowship needs to fulfil its vision.

***Jeremy Audas, Chief Executive Officer***

## Mental Illness Fellowship South Australia

It has been an absorbing 12 months at MIFSA, full of new programs and partnerships, as well as an ongoing commitment to increasing the quality of existing services, whilst building strong systems to allow for further growth and development.

We have worked hard to ensure programs respond flexibly to the needs of thousands of individuals who connected with MIFSA over the past year. Individuals have accessed our 3 Activity Programs in regional SA and Metro Adelaide, Community Education sessions, Well Ways programs, Peer Work Training, Counselling, Support groups and many 100's of participants connecting with our 6 PHaMs program as well as Respite Programs, including our Respite House.

At MIFSA we talk about “sharing the journey” – in fact it is our organisation’s slogan. For most of the time sharing the journey means walking alongside people as they progress their recovery and/or carer journeys. For MIFSA sharing the journey also means lobbying, advocating and encouraging funders, policy makers, politicians and potential corporate sponsors to invest in community services which assist and support people to manage their mental health conditions.

Highlights in the past year included a visit from the Prime Minister, Hon Julia Gillard in May 2011 involving a meeting with MIFSA participants who shared how our range of commonwealth funded MIFSA programs have supported their recovery and carer journeys. MIFSA developed submissions to various inquiries, for example MIFSA participants and staff shared their experiences in regard to education and/or employment, providing input to the Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation during a public hearing at Parliament House and during a morning tea for the Committee at MIFSA Panangga.

Over 2011 we have also been building a new strategic plan which will expand on the progress we have made over the past few years. Our strategic focus has been on reaching people we haven’t reached before whilst also building a strong MIFSA as we strive to be the organisation of first choice in mental health. The following represents just a few highlights:

- We increased our services targeted specifically to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- We continued to develop the cultural competency via strategies including employment of an Aboriginal Broker and Cultural Brokers from more than 11 countries, speaking over 14 languages
- We established a range of new partnerships and programs consistent with our strategic goal to “Reach People We Haven’t Reached Before”
- We worked with participants accessing new MIFSA programs including Residential Respite Program, Tobacco and Mental Illness Project, PHaMs Humanitarian Program, Well Ways Duo and Well Ways Snapshot
- We developed a corporate sponsorship partnership and relationships with a number of organisations and individuals who generously fundraise on MIFSA’s behalf
- We worked on raising our profile through a range of means including via increased radio spots, a refreshed website and a range of promotional materials

“The number one thing I have done is become an empowered health consumer.” Juanita

“Stigma around mental health needs to be tackled from two directions – services for the people who identify as having a mental illness, but also early intervention and preventative care for those who are at risk of developing a mental illness, but who would not access services badged as ‘for mental illness’” Sarah, addressing the Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation

- We have renewed our commitment to continue to develop services which support people to progress their recovery or carer journeys and which provide opportunities for life-changing work

There are many challenges in a growing and thriving organisation. We have met each with enthusiasm and the combined energy and expertise of the MIFSA Team made up of staff, participants, Board of Management and volunteers.

**Natasha Miliotis, Chief Executive Officer**



## **Mental Health Carers (ARAFMI) Northern Territory**

Our key focus has always been to provide quality services for people impacted by mental illness. Over the year, this has raised a number of challenges as well as an equal number of successes that have been celebrated by carers and consumers and the organisation alike.

Towards the end of 2010, we celebrated securing some one-off funds from our collaboration with the Mental Health Partnership to set up our carers room which involved transforming an office into a lovely space where carers can come and relax with a cuppa, browse our library, watch a DVD or speak privately with a member of staff. The room has also doubled as a place where we are able to hold support groups, small meetings and interviews.

“Every time I heard someone talking about their mental illness, it made it easier for me to acknowledge my own.” Lisa addressing the Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation

Unfortunately during this year we were challenged in trying to secure ongoing funding to move Pete’s Place to more suitable premises. The drop in centre although vital for social activities and peer support will once again endure a wet season without air conditioning. Our staff will of course endeavour to provide stimulating activities over the up and coming wet season, however activities around our theme this year of “Physical Health” will be limited.

We have celebrated the ongoing training of staff to enable quality programs and services to be delivered. This year a number of staff have gained a Cert 4 in Mental Health, as well as training in developing Mental Health plans for indigenous clients, training in supporting somebody who self harms and training in Suicide prevention. Staff have also received training for facilitating the following programs:

- “Smoke Free” a smoking cessation program for people living with mental illness
- Wellways ‘Building a Future’ and “Snapshot” programs for carers supporting somebody with a mental illness
- SMILES a program for primary school children who have a parent, sibling or loved one with a mental illness.
- SANE grief and bereavement to raise the awareness of service providers around grief and bereavement relating to suicide and missing persons.

Our committed board this year, have apart from providing governance for the organisation, supported the organisation and people impacted by mental illness in a variety of ways including advocating on MH issues at both a local and National level, promoting programs, raising funds and initiating partnerships.

Last year, we were also extremely lucky to be nominated recipients of substantial donations from the Australian Hoteliers Association and the Bottle O for which we

are exceedingly grateful. The donations from these entities have assisted in providing support services for carers in the rural area, and will continue this year to provide individual support services to people living with a mental illness.

Over the next financial year we will continue to actively seek funding to re-locate Pete's Place to an air conditioned premises. This will provide an opportunity for programs to run over the wet season and also provide an opportunity for programs to continue throughout the afternoons.

We will also be rolling out our SMILES program (see above) and Individual Recovery Program for people living with a mental illness

**Lorraine Davies, Manager**



## **Mental Illness Fellowship of Queensland**

This is my first annual report to the Mental Illness Fellowship of Queensland. I commenced in my role as Chief Executive Officer in January this year, and it has been a privilege to be a part of the Fellowship team during this time. I have valued the relationships I have made with members and program participants, the support and guidance I have received from the Board, and the passion and commitment of the team working at the Fellowship.

Starting a journey with a new organisation, is an exciting time. For me it has been immensely energising and rewarding. The excitement comes from appreciating and acknowledging the achievements that have come before, and the opportunity to build on these strengths, to reach even more of the potential for change.

I see that my role, as the Chief Executive Officer, is to facilitate the strengths, talents and resources of the Fellowship, so that we give expression to the vision, values and mission of the membership. In essence, this is to build a community where people with mental illness are accepted and valued, and where carers are supported and validated.

Keeping members and participants at the centre of our work is important for several reasons. It helps us to see the *person* first, not their diagnosis or our service. And it helps us to give a voice to people - to create change in our community and in government policy. This is why a vibrant and engaged membership is so important to the Fellowship. There is no stronger voice than the lived experiences of members, and it is this voice that gives rise to real change in the social and political spheres critical to ensuring that people with mental illness, and their carers and families, receive the clinical and community recovery services they need.

Through our network of offices in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Gladstone, we're able to provide targeted support to people in one or more of their recovery goals. This is enabled through our partnerships with the Federal and Queensland Governments. Beyond these funded services, so much of our work involves building partnerships with other community agencies and government services. More and more, community organisations are working in partnership within their communities to provide integrated responses to people's needs. Our offices are the face of the Fellowship in their community, and an active member of community networks and partnerships.

"The worker was sensitive and patient. It was good to see my wife getting excited about the worker coming over, she used to get dressed up and wait for her. This gave her more responsibility in her life, something to look forward to and something to do." Excerpt from a carer story, describing a recovery journey for his wife

“I used to be very nervous about going out of the house but I wanted to because I was lonely here at home when the children are at school and my husband is out shopping and taking care of the children. The worker helped me feel better about going out and now I can do this much easier. I think that after this I will keep going to meditation and to the gym; and I really think that by being more happy I will not be going to the hospital as much anymore.” Excerpt from a consumer story.

At the heart of our transformation are the people in our team. We value the passion, commitment and talents that our team contributes every day.

At a national level, the Mental Illness Fellowship of Queensland is committed to a viable and effective national alliance, through the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA). Myself and my CEO colleagues in other states actively contribute to the MIFA business plan. The strength that comes from all of our collective experience and achievements will assist us all to secure the resources we need to respond better to the critical needs of our members and our communities.

In Queensland we enjoy a unique arrangement where two organisations represent our state. Together with my CEO colleague in North Queensland, and with the support of our respective Boards, the Fellowship movement in Queensland presents a united and effective resolve to meet the needs of our diverse and decentralised state.

I appreciate the support of our funding partners: Queensland Department of Communities; Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and Federal Department of Health and Ageing. Our partnership with Queensland Health and other government and community supporters is also very much appreciated.

In closing, I thank my Leadership Team of Brian Beck, Danielle Eddison, Joseph Fung and Chantelle Ritchie for their outstanding support and leadership. The governance, support and encouragement of the Board, and especially the President Ken Meissner, has been tremendous in enabling me and the team to contribute to a community where people with mental illness are accepted and valued, and where carers are supported and validated.

***Tony Stevenson, Chief Executive Officer***



The reality is that people living with mental illnesses are living in the community more than ever before and, like all Australians, most simply want a place to call their own,' Rob Ramjan CEO SFNSW

## **Schizophrenia Fellowship of New South Wales**

This year saw the NSW Fellowship's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which was celebrated at a gala dinner attended by over 500 people including the NSW Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Barbara Perry, the NSW Shadow Minister, Kevin Humphries, the Federal Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and the Australian of the Year Prof Patrick McGorry.

A new destigmatisation campaign featuring a national Avant Card campaign, posters and a television commercial was launched using the line "voices in your head are not as bad as voices behind your back". NSW services extended to 44 sites across the state serving both consumers and carers through Day to Day Living, Personal Helpers and Mentors, Respite, Carer Assist, ONFIRE Young Carers, Resource Recovery, Clubhouse and Disability Employment Services.

The Fellowship achieved the highest standard under the Quality Improvement Council Standards receiving back to back three year accreditation with Industry Leadership recognition. Pioneer Clubhouse also achieved back to back three year accreditation under the International Centre for Clubhouse Development Standards.

Our work with the NSW Police continues and has been recognised in two major ways. Other jurisdictions are expressing great interest in adopting the model and the ACT Police have already done so. The program has also received awards from the Australia New Zealand TheMHS Conference (Special Judges Award) and the NSW Association for Mental Health Mental Health Matters Awards (Gold Award).

**Rob Ramjan, Chief Executive Officer**



## ARAFMI Tasmania

ARAFMI Tasmania has experienced significant change during the last 12 months. We have undertaken recruitment of two Executive Officers within a six-month period, with the current EO commencing in January. Since then, we have implemented significant evaluation and changes to governance and operational practices completed a very positive stakeholder review and developed a three year strategic plan.

ARAFMI is very pleased to be a member of MIFA and is experiencing positive outcomes already from the National federation alliance.

The role of ARAFMI as the key state-wide mental health carer/family member organisation is to:

- Build and sustain a state-wide carer/family membership;
- Provide evidence based training and support to carer/family representatives;
- Facilitate carer/family representative processes within Tasmania;
- Provide general resource information to carers/family members in relation to mental health issues;
- Provide systemic advocacy from a carer/family perspective;
- Provide contracted carer/family representation to mental health services;
- Work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including the government and community mental health sectors, to facilitate the establishment and implementation of peer support models and a carer/family workforce across the state.
- Provide advice in relation to carer/family issues to Mental Health Services and other stakeholder groups;
- Work collaboratively with other mental health consumer groups, carer/family organisations and groups, Mental Health Services and Community Sector Organisations and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (Peak Body).
- Provide a focus on peer support.

We are guided by the following principles, as identified through the recent strategic planning process:

- We believe that recovery of mental health is possible. This is assisted by a focus on strengths within individuals and community.
- We will deliver services, education and advocacy that are high quality and professional.
- We are committed to listening to and respecting the experiences of people affected by mental Ill Health.
- We encourage active participation at all levels. This is assisted by a peer support model.
- We will challenge and work to reduce mental Ill health stigma in the community.

“If you look at 100 per cent of the hardship that mental illness caused me, only around 20 per cent was caused by symptoms, that is: hearing voices, delusional thinking and the myriad of hallucinations. The majority of the negative impact on my life – that is 80 per cent – came from the damage caused to my world, my sense of self, and my relationship to the community. My everyday life was turned upside down, and this is what caused most of the pain.” David Braniff on the 80:20 rule

- We believe that all people have the right to make decisions about their health and well being.
- We will pursue our goals through positive relationships, connectedness and collaboration.

Our Key objectives 2011-2014

1. Increase awareness and understanding and further develop and promote ARAFMI 's role and functions as the primary carer organisation across Tasmania
2. Ensure quality, appropriate and contemporary governance practice
3. Engage with carers, families, and friends of people affected by mental Ill Health
4. Identify and develop collaborative partnership opportunities
5. Increase funding to ARAFMI through sponsorship as well as additional projects funded by government (state and federal)
6. Develop a peer support work force and increase peer support services.

There are many challenges ahead for ARAFMI as it seeks new and increased funding opportunities to meet the significant unmet carers' needs and becomes a sustainable carer organisation for the 125 thousand Tasmanians living with mental ill health.

**Wendy Groot, Executive Officer**

### **Mental Illness Fellowship of Western Australia**

It is a great space in the Mental Health Sector currently, with acknowledgement from both the Federal and State governments that the mental health of all Australians is a priority and increased investment in this historically neglected area is paramount.

The WA State government appears to be solidly focused on mental health reform with the forming of the State Mental Health Commission, led by Eddie Bartnik as the Mental Health Commissioner and a Minister for mental health who is dedicated to the success of this reform process.

- MIFWA has much to celebrate this year with contract extensions to 2014 to deliver our FaHCSIA funded Family Support and Well Ways Regional Programs.
- The State Mental Health Commission has also provided additional funding to upgrade Technology and Information systems, a Tobacco Cessation Project for people with mental illness in hostels and rehabilitation units and a Parent Peer worker initiative to compliment the Family Support Program.
- The Lorikeet Rehabilitation Centre currently attracts around 35 members daily and has been focused on increasing community activities to promote improved physical health and community inclusion.
- The Well Ways Carer Education Program forms an integral part of the delivery of carers programs in the Perth Metropolitan area in the South West, Goldfields and Wheatbelt regions. Our partnerships formed with Bunbury Pathways, Bay of Isles Community Organisation (BOICO) in Esperance and Busselton Learning about Mental Illness program (LAMP) have resulted in the training of 25 carer facilitators for delivery of education in all 3 regions.
- Developments in the south west regions as a result of Well Ways are exciting and include the delivery of the program to an Indigenous group of carers in Bunbury, two of whom have now completed training as facilitators for the



“The important thing is to talk to your doctor when you are well.”  
Prof Tim Lambert

region. Busselton LAMP has developed the 'Why Warriors' Communication Workshops for Indigenous Carers.

- MIFWA's Early Intervention Recovery Program for young people diagnosed with early episode psychosis is working in partnership with the University of WA on a Resilience Research Project, funded by the WA Mental Health Commission.
- The Family Support Program, now in operation for over 3 years, continues to demonstrate exceptional outcomes for families. MIFWA's ongoing partnership with COMIC WA (Children of Mentally Ill Consumers) has resulted in the successful funding of a Business Plan Proposal, jointly submitted to the Mental Health Commission for the introduction of Parent Peer workers to work alongside existing staff of the Program.

The Fellowships' national focus for Schizophrenia Awareness Week this year, focused on improving physical health outcomes for people with mental illness. Along with sister Fellowships around the country, MIFWA was part of a national and state webinar event, "Unlocking the Door to Health and Wellbeing: Where do we find the key?"

"My experience of meeting my peer worker whilst I was a patient in hospital was pivotal for my recovery path. She had the authority to speak through her own lived experience with words that gave me hope and encouragement, feeling I was not alone." Lisa addressing the Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation

The MIFWA state event was privileged to have the Hon. Helen Morton, Minister for Mental Health and Disability Services, open the event at Edith Cowan University. In her speech, the Minister stated that the Mental Health Commission would be releasing a strategic plan which included a focus on personalised care and recovery and that 'a key element will be stronger early intervention and prevention programs with recognition that improving physical health enhances recovery from mental illness.'

MIFWA thanks the State Mental Health Commission, Lotterywest and FaHCSIA for funding its programs and projects. As we move closer to a more formalised relationship with MIFA our national body and sister Fellowships around Australia, we become stronger together and more focused in our shared vision to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness.

MIFWA's success always depends on good management of all programs and again, we are privileged to have committed and competent Program Managers and a Communications Officer who has made significant improvements in the production of the MIFWA newsletter, Schizophrenia Awareness Week events and raising the organisational and mental health sector profile through some excellent promotional work. Last and certainly not least, we thank our donors and members for continuing to support MIFWA as these contributions go directly towards improving our services.

***Sandra Vidot, Chief Executive Officer***

## Our Member Organisations

### **Mental Illness Fellowship of Nth Qld Inc**

Telephone: 07 4725 3664

[www.mifnq.org.au](http://www.mifnq.org.au)

### **Mental Illness Fellowship of Qld Inc**

Telephone: 07 3358 4424

[www.mifq.org.au](http://www.mifq.org.au)

### **Mental Health Carers (ARAFMI) NT Inc**

Telephone: 08 89481051

[www.mentalhealthcarersnt.org](http://www.mentalhealthcarersnt.org)

### **Mental Illness Fellowship of Sth Australia Inc**

Telephone: 08 8378 4100

[www.mifsa.org](http://www.mifsa.org)

### **Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc**

Telephone: 02 9879 2600

[www.sfnsw.org.au](http://www.sfnsw.org.au)

### **Mental Illness Fellowship of WA Inc**

Telephone: 08 9228 0200

[www.mifwa.org.au](http://www.mifwa.org.au)

### **Mental Health Foundation ACT**

Telephone: 02 6282 6658

[www.mhf.org.au](http://www.mhf.org.au)

### **ARAFMI Tas Inc**

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