



# THE AUTHORISED MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER

## Newsletter

Issue 1

April 2002

This is the First Edition of Jigsaw, the Newsletter for all Authorised Mental Health Practitioners and others who are interested in issues to do with the Mental Health Legislation in W A

### Farewell to Michael

After 18 months as Clinical Consultant to the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, Michael Rowland decided to return to his home town of Galway in Eire. His decision was based on family considerations and the offer of a post as the Manager, Mental Health and Aged Care for the mid-west district in County Galway. Michael returned to Eire in February. We are all going to miss him and we would like to publicly thank him for his great contribution to mental health in WA.

Michael as we all knew him!



### AMHP Activity Forms

Thank you to all AMHPs for completing the bi-annual reports. There are now 247 AMHPs in WA. In the 6 month period July-December 2001, AMHPs completed 642 assessments under the Mental Health Act and referred a person for examination (Form 1) on 110 occasions. This indicates that AMHPs are using their powers sensitively and in line with the least restrictive option.

Transport orders (form 3) were necessary on 91 occasions. Clearly police assistance was necessary on a high number of referrals and the police have raised the issue as to whether *'the condition of the person is such that assistance is required (s.34(2)(a))*. Police stats indicate that the police were used far more with referrals from medical practitioners. This is an issue which needs to be addressed through the police liaison meetings. (see page 2) Pauline Robertson manages the AMHP database and we hope to improve the system to provide more information.

### Restructure of the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist

The gospel according to HARC (Health Administrative Review Committee) has decreed that the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP) will operate separately and independently from the Office of Mental Health Services (OMHS). Since Professor Lipton's retirement, Dr Aaron Groves has been the Chief Psychiatrist (CP) as well as the A/General Manager of the Mental Health Division. However one of the first tasks of the Department of Health is to appoint a new CP and the position was advertised on 6 April 2002.

The functions and tasks of the new OCP will be determined by the new CP in consultation with stakeholders and legislative requirements. This process has commenced with a recent workshop with a variety of stakeholders.

Change is in the air and this intrepid reporter will keep you informed of all the changes as they happen.

## Review of the Act

The Minister for Health announced on 28 November 2001 that a review of the Act as required by the legislation would commence in the New Year under the direction of Professor D'Arcy Holman of UWA. Section 215 of the Act requires that a review be conducted after 5 years from the commencement of the Act, however in line with Labor Party commitments prior to the election a review will now take place before the 5 year period has expired. The purpose of the review is to look at the operations and effectiveness of the Act and specifically consider the Council of Official Visitors and the Mental Health Review Board. For AMHPs this is an opportunity to ensure that not only the role of AMHPs be clarified but specific duties like referral and involvement of the police be considered afresh. AMHPs may make submissions when called for, however if you wish to make comments to the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist you may as the Office will be preparing its own submission to the review process. The Executive Officer to the review is Ms Sylvia Meier. At present we do not have details on how the review will be conducted but hopefully all services will be informed soon of the process and a request for submissions made.

### AMHP Forum

The OCP understands that the 2/3 day AMHP training is minimal and the development of further education is high on the agenda. We would now like to progress the idea of a AMHP Forum which can be repeated a number of times allowing participation from all AMHPs. We will be getting together a small reference group, but in the meantime if you have ideas as to what YOU would like to see in a One Day Forum please send your ideas to Tim.

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### CTO Review

We completed the CTO Review in December 2001 and a copy is available on the intranet (OCP page of mental health website). If you are unable to access a copy please contact Tim who can e-mail a copy. The Review is a comprehensive analysis of the use of CTOs and a precursor to the Guidelines, which have almost been completed. Draft copies of the Guidelines will be distributed soon for comment and feedback

### The AMHP Caption Competition:

What is number 16 saying?  
Ideas back to Tim. Winner to be announced next newsletter

### Next Training Dates

The next AMHP Review of Skills programme will be at St John of God Conference Centre on 26, 27 and 28 June 2002. Managers wishing to nominate mental health practitioners need to send nomination forms to Tim Rolfe ASAP.

### Police Liaison Committees

The OCP understands Mental Health clinicians have commenced meeting with colleagues from local Police services in line with the Protocols agreed between the Department of Health and the West Australian Police Service back in 2000. Liaison with Police ensures local agreement is made on how Police Officers can support Mental Health Clinicians and vice versa. Developing a working relationship and agreeing on a way to operate makes managing mental health emergencies, patient transfers and crises less problematic. Feedback from those clinicians who have local arrangements in place indicate it has made "a big difference" to the way they work. Good local planning and a working relationship with your local Police Officers mean everyone knows what is expected and patient care is delivered smoothly. The aim of the protocol is to promote a high standard of care to the mentally ill person and to establish guidelines for Police Officers and mental health staff on situation management where either agency has requested assistance from the other. For further information contact Yvonne Pallier.

### Mental Health Act Forms

The 14 Forms used under the Mental Health Act are available to be downloaded from the OCP page of the mental health website on the Intranet. Note that some of the Forms need two-sided photocopying before being used.

### Office of the Chief Psychiatrist Contacts

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