



## ABOUT THE MHCSA

The MHCSA is the peak body promoting the interests of South Australian non-government organisations supporting people with a psychiatric disability.

It was officially incorporated in September 2002 and currently has 22 organisational members.



Figure 1: Participants of psychosocial rehabilitation training engage in some practical exercises.

## THE INITIATIVE: Sector Workforce Development

*“The MHCSA is committed to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the mental health sector to support people affected by mental illness.”*

## HOW IT WAS DONE

- Developing a strategic paper outlining the key directions and actions required to ensure that SA has a skilled, motivated and effective workforce in the community mental health service sector (non government) to deliver future recovery and consumer oriented mental health services.
- Appointing a Project Officer (Training) in 2005 to develop workforce development strategies.
- Designing and managing training and other professional development opportunities to enhance sector capacity, including maintaining a Training Calendar.
- Building a reputation as a key centre for information and advice on workforce development.
- Lobbying for training funding and managing the allocation of funds via brokerage
- Identifying support structures to foster continuous improvement and build effective relationships with key organisations.
- Recommending future directions for training through the Vocational Education system

## **IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Funding was secured from Dept of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) to deliver Psychosocial Rehabilitation training program (developed by VICSERV in Victoria), with further funding secured from DFEEST and SA Health
- In 2007, 19 participants (working in the sector) completed the Psychosocial Rehabilitation training program.
- 8 of the above participants continued on to complete Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment qualifications.
- With the involvement of these participants, the Psychosocial Rehabilitation program has continued in 2008, with over 100 participants in the first quarter



*Figure 2: Geoff Harris, Executive Director MHCSA, receiving the Judges Award from Alison Arblaster, CEO SA Health & Community Services Skills Board, at the Human Services at Work Awards for Excellence in Workforce Development 2008 Dinner*

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## **LESSONS LEARNED**

- The overwhelming response for psychosocial rehabilitation training places in 2008 stretched our resources to the limit and confirmed our research on the level of future training needs across the sector.
- The engagement of existing senior managers as trainers in the delivery of the psychosocial rehabilitation training has provided a depth of experience to the program that is reportedly providing significant and positive change to workplace practices.
- With heavy demands for training in 2009 expected to continue, our challenge is to maintain a sufficient pool of available trainers to meet demand.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The MHCSA will continue to play a significant role in developing the workforce skills that will meet the needs of people with a mental illness well into the future. They will continue to manage the delivery of Psychosocial Rehabilitation training, as well as offering more awareness training to organisations.

They are working towards the establishment of a Certificate IV in Mental Health (non-clinical) as a minimum standard qualification for all workers in the non-government mental health sector in SA.

MHCSA has undertaken a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis of the sector, the recommendations from which will drive the future directions in workforce development for the sector over the next three years.

The MHCSA will also be evaluating training by each participant for the purpose of establishing baseline data and measuring the impact of training on the future capacity and effectiveness of the sector's workforce.

Plans are in place to appoint a training manager as soon as practicable to continue the effective management and growth of the MHCSA's established training function.