



## Better Support for Carers

### *Committee holds hearing with national peak organisations*

The House of Representatives Family and Community Committee will hear evidence from two national peak organisations, the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) and the National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID), at a public hearing to be held in Parliament House on Wednesday 22 October, between 10.15 am and 11.15 am.

In its submission to the inquiry, the MHCA recommends the introduction of national mental health legislation that "...enshrines the rights of carers to formal recognition".

Committee Chair, Annette Ellis (Member for Canberra, ACT) said that "evidence presented to the Committee has highlighted the particular challenges facing those that provide care for people with a mental illness, due in part to the often unpredictable and episodic nature of mental illness".

The submission from the NCID has a strong focus on the role of parents and family members caring for children with an intellectual disability. The NCID emphasises the need for parents and families to have ready access to information on the services and supports available noting that "... ease of access to relevant information has been identified frequently by parents as having a significant impact on their and their families' stress levels and capacity to cope with the role of caring for a person with a disability."

"Difficulty navigating the complex maze of services and supports available has emerged as a complex issue," Ms Ellis said. "The Committee is keen to hear suggestions for practical measures that will assist families caring for people with a disability to access information more easily and when they need it."

The hearing on 22 October will provide the MHCA and the NCID with an opportunity to provide additional evidence on these important issues to the Committee.

The program for the hearing is as follows:

**Wednesday, 22 October 2008 – 10.15 am to 11.15 am**  
**Parliament House, Committee Room 1R5**

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| <b>10.15 am – 10.45 am</b> | Mental Health Council of Australia          |
| <b>10.45 am – 11.15 am</b> | National Council on Intellectual Disability |

All are welcome to observe proceedings. The hearing will be webcast live on:  
<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Annette Ellis, on (02) 6293 1344 (electorate office).

**For all other inquiries** please contact the Inquiry Secretary by phone on (02) 6277 4566 or by email [fchy.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:fchy.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/fchy](http://www.aph.gov.au/fchy)