

Provided at 30/3/10 Perth hearing  
Suicide Inquiry - 2-31pm



## Hearing Voices Network Australia

### Report of Activities – March 2010

The Hearing Voices Network Australia (HVNA) is a collection of Hearing Voices Groups and affiliated members working to promote recovery, acceptance and education to consumers and clinicians in relation to those who hear voices, see visions, and other like experiences.

The role of the Hearing Voices Network is to *enable acceptance of hearing voices and promote recovery for people who hear distressing voices. This will be achieved through support for self-help groups, education, and awareness.* One of the main aims of HVNA is to reduce anxiety, ignorance, stigma and isolation about hearing voices, and offer support to those who hear them.

A number of Hearing Voices Groups have been established in the Perth metropolitan area, as well as a group in Bunbury. These groups are primarily made up of people who hear voices; some consumers facilitate the groups themselves, and in some groups there is an outside facilitator. Self-help support groups are of significant importance to Voice Hearers. Within the peer support groups, consumers meet and talk with each other, offering peer support, sharing viewpoints and strategies to support each other, and exploring ways to work with, rather than fight against, their voices. In this manner, voice hearers are able to reclaim control over and rebuild their lives.

In November 2007, the Hearing Voices Network Australia was awarded the Mental Health Good Outcomes Award, Consumer Group or Individual category, by the Minister for Health, Hon. J McGinty, at the Awards breakfast held at the Parmelia Hilton.

The education component of HVNA is on the increase. A two-day workshop entitled the *Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop* is run on an almost-monthly basis. The workshops are well-attended, and the evaluation forms reflect that this type of training is in high demand for mental health workers working with Voice Hearers.

Awareness of HVNA is slowly increasing also, mainly due to the *Recovery from Psychosis* Conference as well as the annual *INTERVOICE* meeting, both of which were held in November 2008 in Perth, WA. As a result of both events, the number of enquiries relating to working with voices has increased dramatically. Various organisations throughout WA have requested assistance with staff training to do voices work, as well as setting up groups in their local areas.

HVNA has supported and assisted PhD students with their research. In 2006 a PhD student did a study on voices and Schizophrenia. At present we are assisting a PhD student in Queensland with her study on people who hear voices and the support they require to remain in the workforce.

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#### HEARING VOICES NETWORK AUSTRALIA

Auspiced by Richmond Fellowship of WA



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HVNA has received substantial donations from Hywel Davies (UK), which has allowed for the reproduction of the Information Booklet as well as the Coping Strategies Poster. Both of these publications are in high demand by consumers, families and friends, and workers. HVNA also received two grants from the Mental Health Council of Australia, one for developing a its own website, and one to assist with the development of a Business Plan. Both projects have been completed. Incorporated into this was the development of a new logo and banner for HVNA which more encompasses the ethos of Voice Hearers being united. The new logo as well as the Website were launched in August 2009.

HVNA funding has ceased as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009. However, Richmond Fellowship WA, who recognizes the importance of the work done within the Network, is continuing to sponsor the HVNA.

### An average week in HVNA

The table below outlines where the majority of the hours of a typical week are spent. It clearly shows that 71% of the time is spent with consumers, their family and friends, as well as case managers and other service providers. Consumers and their family members make calls on the weekends also, as a lot of case managers are not available on the weekends.

DAY	SERVICE CONTACT (in hours)	SERVICE SUPPORT (in hours)	ADMINISTRATION (in hours)	No of SERVICE CONTACTS
Sunday	0.75	0	0	1
Monday	0.5	3	4	6
Tuesday	3.25	3.25	1	1
Wednesday	2	6	0.5	7
Thursday	1	6.25	0.25	5
Friday	0.25	2.5	6.25	2
Saturday	0	0	0	0

Service contact: the provision of a service by a service provider for consumers.

Service support: provision of service on behalf of a consumer (incl. prep for contact, contact with family, case managers etc.).

Admin: general administration tasks related to the service as a whole.

Number of service contacts: the number of times one has contact with a consumer and/or their family members.

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## Service Demographics

Currently the consumers are:

- Of mixed gender
- Aged between 15-60 years old

A number of mental health service providers have or will be attending the training provided by Richmond Fellowship WA about Hearing Voices Awareness workshops. The coordinator of the Network has regular contacts via phone and email with mental health workers around Australia.

## Frequency of Contact with Clients

Hearing Voices Groups meet on weekly basis for around 2hrs at a time. The groups have some very committed consumers as well as consumers who attend irregularly.

Throughout a normal working week, the Coordinator also receives numerous calls from voice hearers or carers of voice hearers about the distress the voice hearers are in. Frequently they have to be referred on to services such as LifeLine or The Samaritans, as HVNA does not deal with crisis intervention and suicidal ideation at present, although the advantages of doing so is currently being explored.

## Hearing Voices Groups

A number of HVG have been started in the Perth metropolitan area, as well as rural WA and interstate. Some of these groups are still going, others have had to stop due to lack of participants, and others have started due to successes in the local community and the increasing demand for groups. The following table outlines the average number of attendees per group.

GROUP	DATE COMMENCED	DATE CEASED	AVERAGE No of ATTENDEES	COMMENTS
Armadale	May 2007	August 2007	4	This group never really came "off the ground". We tried different locations, but to no avail.
Bassendean/ Fremantle	July 2006	January 2007	In excess of 10 each week	The group had to split up due to size exceeding 20 attendees,
Bassendean	January 2007	ongoing	5	The group is facilitated by RFWA staff at present

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Bunbury & Busselton	October 2006	ongoing	8-15	This group is facilitated by RFWA staff at present.
Busselton	May 2008	October 2009	3-5	Facilitated by RFWA staff, people from the community also participate along with residents from the RFWA CSRU site. Trying to re-establish this group
Fremantle	January 2007	April 2008	5-10	This group started off very well for the first 12 months, but then slowly petered out due to staff changes at JoC and RFWA, and participants did not want to attend anymore.
Joondalup	May 2009	ongoing	4	The group is facilitated by the June O'Connor Day2Day Living staff.
Queens Park	January 2009	ongoing	5	This group was started between RFWA Fremantle and QP sites, and now meets weekly at QP, with residents from Fremantle traveling each week to QP. RFWA SIL clients also attending.
Rockingham	July 2006	November 2008	6-8	Since Nov 2008 people have not been attending, so the group has been put on hold. Should start again soon, with assistance of the clinic.
Subiaco	October 2007	ongoing	4-8	Meet at the June O'Connor Centre, and is facilitated by a consumer. Staff have added a social aspect to the group to encourage informal chats also, and stimulate more participation.
Esperance	2006	ongoing		(unable to ascertain exact data due to no response to emails and phone calls)
Melbourne	2006	ongoing		(unable to ascertain exact data due to no response to emails and phone calls)
Brisbane	July 2008	ongoing	2-4	This group is really struggling to get off the ground, as people turn up for a few meetings, then don't return. It is held at a consumer's place.
Sydney	Mid-2008	ongoing		Started their own network in NSW now, run by Douglas Holmes

A Young People's Hearing Voices Group commenced on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2009, being run from The Lorikeet Centre (MIFWA). The group was originally facilitated by HVNA staff as well as The Lorikeet centre staff, but facilitation has been taken over by a consumer. The Lorikeet Centre staff still attend the weekly group meeting in a supervisory role only. Approximately 5-7 consumers attend on a regular basis.



## Training delivered by HVNA / RFWA in relation to Hearing Voices

The following table outlines the different training offered to RFWA staff, other organisations, and consumers and family members.

WORKSHOP	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES	COMMENTS
Working with Voice Hearers August, 2006 – 2 days	50	Held at the Alexander Library. Training run by Ron Coleman, where the workers “took along” a consumer who hears voices, and worked with then throughout the 2-day training
Working with Voice Hearers 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> August, 2007 – 2 days	32	Workshop run by Ron Coleman, where the workers “took along” a consumer who hears voices, and worked with then throughout the 2-day training. Held at the Balmoral Hotel, Vic Park
Working with Voice Hearers - 9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> August, 2007 – 2 days	32	Workshop run by Ron Coleman, where the workers “took along” a consumer who hears voices, and worked with then throughout the 2-day training. Held at the Balmoral Hotel, Vic Park.
Recovery and Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – January 2008	22	Training facilitated by Lyn Mahboub, Marlene Janssen and Natalia Fidyka
Hearing Voices Awareness Training – Canberra, 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2008	35	All attendees were workers in the Mental Health system in Canberra / ACT. The training was sponsored by Richmond Fellowship ACT. Training facilitated by Marlene Janssen
Hearing Voices Awareness Training – Canberra, 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2008	40	Most staff were from CentaCare, a mental health provider organization in Canberra. Training facilitated by Marlene Janssen
About Recovery Workshop – June 2008	9	Facilitated by Lyn Mahboub and David Rivett
Critical Understanding of Mental Illness (a RFWA/HVNA 2-day workshop) – July 2008	22	Facilitated by Lyn Mahboub and David Rivett

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About Hearing Voices – part A – July 2008	28	Facilitated by Lyn Mahboub and David Rivett
About Hearing Voices – part B – July 2008	20	Facilitated by Lyn Mahboub and David Rivett
About Hearing Voices – Part A - September 2008	24	Facilitated by Lyn Mahboub and David Rivett
About Hearing Voices – Part B – September 2008	22	Facilitated by Lyn Mahboub and David Rivett
Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – 29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	27	Facilitated by Marlene Janssen
Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – 26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	15	Facilitated by Marlene Janssen
Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – 29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	21	Facilitated by Marlene Janssen
Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – RUAH 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2009	11	Facilitated by Marlene Janssen
Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – Busselton – 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	8	Facilitated by Marlene Janssen
Hearing Voices Awareness Workshop – 29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2009	22	Facilitated by Marlene Janssen

#### Other Presentations:

- INTERVOICE 2006 - UK

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- INTERVOICE 2007 - Denmark
- Early Episode Psychosis Conference – Fremantle, 2007
- Hawthorn House – staff and residents presentation – May 2007
- ARAFMI BreakThrough Series – September 2007
- Department of Health Presentation – September 2007
- Horizons – September 2007
- Facilitator’s training (specifically for those who facilitate hearing voices groups) – October 2007
- HealthRight presentation – November 2007
- Swan Clinic Mental Health Staff Forum – January 2008
- Early Episode Psychosis Conference – Rockingham, April 2008
- CURTIN University – Social Work Students, 2008
- Murdoch University – Psychology students, 2008
- Recovery from Psychosis Conference 2008
- INTERVOICE 2008
- Council of Official Visitors – July 2009
- TheMHS Conference - September 2009
- World Hearing Voices Conference – September 2009
- INTERVOICE 2009 – September 2009 (Holland)
- CURTIN University – Psychologists Department, January 2010
- Graylands Post-Graduate Nursing Students – March 2010
- Catholic Education Office – March 2010



## INTERVOICE 2008

*(The International Network for Training, Education and Research into Hearing Voices)*

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual INTERVOICE meeting was held outside of Europe for the first time this year, in Perth, WA. Over 110 people registered for this event, most of whom came from overseas. Countries represented included Holland, England, Scotland, Wales, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Pakistan, Japan, Italy and New Zealand, as well as a number of interstate delegates. The meeting was opened with a “Mad Pride” event held on 6<sup>th</sup> November. The Meeting was officially opened on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> Nov, and ran for 2 days.

Friday saw a number of consumers from different areas of the globe presenting their story of hearing voices to the audience. From morning tea till afternoon tea, discussion groups were organized, where the different delegates discussed all kinds of topics and issues related to the experience of hearing voices. After afternoon tea, the day’s events were summarized, and an overview of research, as well as the next day’s events, were discussed.

Friday night saw a social event take place, where the overseas delegates were introduced to the Aussie BBQ and a Bush Dance. It was enjoyed by one and all.

On Saturday morning the day was started by an introduction to the “Open Space” concept, where anyone could introduce any topic they wished to discuss, and invite people to participate in their discussions. The Open Space was very well received, and comments after the event continue to be praiseworthy of having such an opportunity to speak out. In the afternoon, the official delegates from the various countries provided their reports about the progress and events that have happened in their country’s Hearing Voices Network. A number of Awards were also given.

### **Recovery from Psychosis Conference**

Adjacent to the INTERVOICE meeting, a “Recovery from Psychosis” Conference was organized by RFWA, to utilize the delegates from international places, to increase knowledge and awareness to Mental Health Workers and Consumers in Australia. The Conference, which ran for 3 days at the Perth Convention Centre, was attended by over 350 people, and has had a huge impact on people working within the Mental Health System. RFWA/HVNA staff have received a number of emails and a substantial amount of phone-calls from workers, consumers and carers alike, to share their enthusiasm and appreciation of an agency willing to “throw” this challenge out to those working within the mental health system

Consumer Forum: *The Light at the End of the Tunnel* – held 6<sup>th</sup> November 2008. 13 consumers registered, 35 people attended the day.

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Family and Friends information evenings:

- February 2007
- October 2007
- April 2008 (Canberra)

**Publications and Media**

*Hearing Voices Information Booklet* – 7 editions have been published since its commencement in May 2007. The booklet is very popular with both workers and consumers alike, and there is a great demand for this booklet. In January 2009 alone, over 60 copies were posted out.

*Hearing Voices Network Australia Newsletter: Voices of Change* – 5 editions of the Newsletter have come out since January 2006. The latest edition was produced in February 2009.

*Coping Strategies Poster* – the poster has been re-printed numerous times, thanks to donations from Hywel Davies in the UK. The poster is in extremely high demand.

*The West Australian* (WA state newspaper) – has run 2 stories about the concept Hearing Voices, and what it is like for consumers. October 2007 & November 2008.

*6PR* – Lyn Mahboub was interviewed on air about advocacy for consumers who experience a variety of mental illnesses, including hearing voices.

*A Current Affair* – interview with Amanda Olsen, Lyn Mahboub and Joe Calleja about the experience of hearing voices.

*head2head, Autumn 2009* – magazine from the mental health division, Health Dept of WA. International speakers presenting at the *Recovery from Psychosis Conference* and *INTERVOICE* meeting 2008 (hosted by Richmond Fellowship WA and HVNA) were interviewed regarding their aspects relating to Hearing Voices. A second article describes the journey of recovery from hearing voices.

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## Contacts with other organisations

HVNA liaises frequently with other local and interstate organisations, both government and non-government. A list is provided below:

### Local:

ARAFMI  
Baptist Care  
Bentley Hospital  
BOICOI (Bay of Isles Community Outreach) – Esperance  
COMHWA (previously known as WAMIAC)  
ConnectGroups (formerly known as WISH)  
CURTIN University  
Disabilities Services Commission  
Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network  
Graylands Hospital  
Hawthorn House  
June O'Connor Centres  
LAMP (Learning About Mental Illness) – Busselton  
Lorikeet  
Mental Health Division (Dept of Health WA)  
Mercy Care  
MIFWA  
Office of the Chief Psychiatrist  
Pathways (Bunbury)  
Patricia Street Drop-In Centre  
Perth Home Care  
Perth Inner City Youth Service  
Police (Cannington, Gosnells & Arnadale)  
PolyTechnic TAFE (Midland)  
Rainbow Club  
Red Cross  
Regional Home Care  
RUAH  
Silver Chain  
Tanderra Hostel (Salvation Army)  
UnitingCare West  
University of Western Australia  
YMCA Links Counseling

### Interstate:

Balgartnie (Ararat, Victoria)

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Brisbane West End Community House  
Hearing Voices Network New South Wales  
INTERVOICE  
Mental Health Consumer Network ACT  
Prahran Mission - Melbourne  
Prince of Wales Hospital (Sydney)  
Richmond Fellowship ACT  
Richmond Fellowship Tasmania

International:

National Alliance on Mental Illness (USA)  
Mental Health Council of Dane County (USA)  
Working to Recovery (Ron Coleman)

Other Hearing Voices Networks around the globe:

Danish Hearing Voices Network  
Dundee Hearing Voices Network (Scotland)  
Grampian Hearing Voices Network (Scotland)  
Hearing Voices Network Aotearoa New Zealand  
Hearing Voices Network USA!  
Manchester Hearing Voices Network England

A Business Plan has recently been developed to direct future work within HVNA. It states the following:

*Our vision is that over the next three years:*

- *HVNA will be recognized as a pre-eminent consumer organization*
- *Independent consumer-led HV groups will be operating successfully across Australia with support from HVNA and the Richmond Fellowship WA.*
- *HV groups will be working together collaboratively, valuing shared experience, connectedness, laughter and learning.*
- *There will be positive changes in society in relation to acceptance and understanding of those who hear voices.*
- *HVNA will be:*
  1. *Operating successfully and sustainably.*
  2. *Recognized as the primary consultant in WA and a key consultant in other parts of Australia on how to work with voices.*
  3. *Delivering highly valued professional development, education, training and awareness.*
  4. *Working in partnership with service providers, consumer groups, tertiary institutions and other hearing voices networks.*

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5. *Enriching local, national and international debate and understanding about hearing voices and recovery, including building on the 2008 INTERVOICE conference hosted in Perth by RFWA and HVNA.*

The Hearing Voices Network Australia has put in an application for funding to work on a project specific to working with voice hearers in the workforce. The development of a 1:1 working with voice hearers package is also in the making. HVNA is investigating the possibility of a blog on the new website which will allow voice hearers, carers and workers to communicate with each other about the issues voice hearers have to deal with. The demand for HVNA to provide assistance to mental health workers so that they can support voice hearers remains steady, and there is continued interest in the work that HVNA does.

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