

Ms Kelly Paxman
Principal Research Officer
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Parliament House Canberra ACT



Dear Ms Paxman

Re: Links between MindMatters and mental illness education

I write with regard to the question on notice that resulted from the APAPDC's presentation at the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health Public Hearing on Wednesday 28th September 2005.

Senator Moore requested information on links between MindMatters and mental illness education. The following is an outline of these links.

APAPDC has valued and nurtured links with Mental Illness Education Australia (MIEA) and similar organisations over the life of the MindMatters project. MindMatters worked with MIEA to integrate the MindMatters Understanding Mental Illness resource into their visits to, and pre and post work with schools.

A close working relationship exists between MindMatters and COPMI (Children Of Parents with a Mental Illness) and this has resulted in the collaborative development of a resource for English teachers to use 'Saving Francesca' text with a focus on children of parents with a mental illness.

MIEA was invited to run an information booth at the National MM conference in March 2005 and is represented on two state based MindMatters reference groups in Queensland and the ACT.

The ACT MindMatters program has had MIEA representatives at many MindMatters 2-day professional development programs especially where they are invited to speak about their work in schools. The money collected for entrance at the ACT MindMatters Drama festival goes to MIE (ACT). Students with mental illness who are part of a community support group attended the Drama Festival and are contemplating entering a drama piece next year.

ARAFMI (Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill) is linked to the WA MindMatters working party.

The NSW Student Representative Council voted to work with MindMatters in 2006 to support students with mental health issues. MindMatters will be working with the SRC to develop a Resilience package that they could use throughout the state and this will be carried out in close conjunction with existing MindMatters and well being work in schools.

MindMatters WA has worked with Claire Wigley the Coordinator for ARAFMI. She visits MindMatters schools with someone who has had experience with a mental illness.

There is a youth leadership project in Glenorchy called ON TRACK, where a group of young people are working with the youth participation worker at the council (and have funding from Glenorchy council plus Foundation of Young Australians) to promote positive mental health. They have done some work with Rosetta High students who have done *MindMatters* in class (and the Tas MM project officer has met with the participation officer about MindMatters) and are in the process of developing a website: <http://www.gotdepression.com.au/> (under construction).

A young person in the Northern Territory who was involved with MindMatters at her school has gone on to publicly advocate about young people, mental illness and working in health promoting ways with young people at a variety of education forums including to principals of schools.

The young person who the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) used in their promotion at the launch of MindMatters Plus GP Kit and Website - Scott, from Walcha Central has advocated in public for mental health promotion through MindMatters.

APAPDC greatly values these links and the inspirational young people who give of their time to work with MindMatters and share their personal experiences with mental health issues.

A copy of the Community Matters DVD is being sent to you by post. We are justifiably proud of this resource as it recently won an ATOM Award which recognizes excellence in Film, Television, Animation and Multimedia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Boucher'.

Susan Boucher
CEO, APAPDC