

Appendix

About the Mental Health Association (Qld) Inc

The Mental Health Association was established in 1961 under constitutional objects enjoining a peak body function.

The Association is unique in Queensland. It has a mixed membership combining the high proportion of organisational membership typical of a service development peak with the high proportion of individual memberships typical of consumer peak councils. (*cf Industry Commission, Charitable Organisations In Australia, June 1995, Peak Councils*)

The Association combines three peak council categories identified by the Commission:

1. Social policy peaks engaged in activities aimed at social development goals for the whole community and systems advocacy to Government and Community
2. Service delivery peaks focussed on developing, supporting and maintaining Community Service Delivery Initiatives
3. Consumer peak councils focussing on the specific disadvantaged interest of people with a mental health problem and their carers
4. In addition it partners with the Queensland Community Services Employers Association, providing financial management services and a seat on the board. This peak represents the fourth peak council category identified by the Commission, Employer peak councils with an occupational focus.

The focus of the Association has been diverse in accordance with its constitution:

- Information and referral
- Member support
- Coordination
- Advocacy and representation
- Health promotions
- Education Accredited training with LILT college an RTO
- Individual support programs
- Research and policy development.

The Association has a diversified funding base of Approximately 2 million dollars annually from a variety of Commonwealth and State Departments, membership fees, interest on investments and fees for service. This, as the Commission's report notes (p194) achieves administrative gains to government and protects autonomy.

The Association was a founding member of the Australian National Association of Mental Health that is the national peak for the State Mental Health Association peaks. ANAMH has a seat on the National Mental Health Council and links to the World Federation of Mental Health of which MHAQ is also a member. Through these structures the Association has had and continues to have a voice for the sector Nationally and Internationally. It has links with other Mental Health Peaks in other countries such as the British Association for Mental Health and the New Zealand Commission for Mental Health.

The Association has a state wide structure which supports its peak body functions. This includes governance structures with a state wide management committee for the Association and four Regional Branch Committees:

- Queensland North (Cairns)
- Central Queensland (Bundaberg)
- Queensland South (Ipswich)
- Gold Coast and hinterland (Southport)

These branches have been established for over 10 years and provide a stable regional point of presence for the Association. The membership of the committees includes representation from a variety of regional sector organisations.

The Association has a broad constituency consisting of organisations and individuals, consumers, carers, and service providers including:

- **Members of the Association** – the Association has over 800 members including:
 - ❖ 98 organisations and groups including
 - ❖ Over 700 individual members. The Association seeks input into planning and evaluation from its membership through strategic planning days, surveys, feedback forms and phone contact.
- **People receiving services from the Association** – The Association makes over 30,000 phone calls and receives more than double that each year. People access the information and referral phone service and from this the Association is informed of and maintains a record of issues in the Mental Health Sector across the State. This assists in planning appropriate responses to Government and Community on policy, planning and program issues. Over 5000 people a year access community and professional education, individual access and equity, advocacy and support services. This informs the Association of sector issues, gaps in service, the effect of policy and legislation on the lives of people with a mental health issue and their families.
- **Organisations in partnership with the Association** – the Association is in partnership with over 100 organisations Statewide on a variety of projects.
- **The general public.**

In each category there are:

- Employers
- Groups and organisations in the Mental Health sector
- Intersectorial groups and organisations
- Mental health consumers
- Carers, relatives and friends of people with mental illness
- Health and community service professionals
- Educators and trainers
- Students
- Others concerned with the promotion of mental health and well-being and the treatment and welfare of the mentally ill.
- Partnership arrangements with over 200 organisations from the sector and other sectors for a variety of purposes including employment, training, health promotion and systems advocacy
- Wide Ranging contacts across the state with organisations, media and individuals through its activities in promotions, education and Mental Health Week promotions

The governance structure of the Association includes a variety of specialist advisory committee's, partnership reference groups, partnerships memorandums of understanding, and subcommittees, which support the identification of sector issues.



Figure 1 – The Matrix structure of The Mental Health Association Consortium and Partnership Programs

The MHA is not just a stand-alone agency with programs and project; rather, it is devoted to intersectorial and interagency partnerships and consortiums. These consortiums and partnerships are governed by memorandums of understanding which spell out roles and responsibilities of participating agencies. This Matrix structure is represented in Figure 1.