

## 23 BIG ISSUES

The 23 Big Issues were initially developed at the 2000 TheMHS Consumer Forum in Adelaide and reviewed in Townsville in 2006 and Sydney in 2010.

One of the crucial ingredients in getting a better outcome for people with mental illness is firstly making sure we understand the issues of importance for them, and secondly letting everyone know what the issues are and what should be done about them.

This means we need to collect information from the people involved: those with mental illness; those that care for them; those that provide services to them; and those that make policy about mental health.

In Australia these issues have appeared in a long list of reports, including the 1992 'Burdekin' Report, 1994 National Community Advisory Group Report; "Let's talk about Action" and the 2005 Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) (in association with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) "Not for Service" Report, all express the failure in the mental health system and the need for change for services in Australia.

In New Zealand at a meeting held during 2011 of the Auckland Regional Consumer Network the participants suggested the following three reports be considered to show that these issues still need to be addressed in NZ. The reports are; The 1996 Mason report, Te Kokiri: The Mental Health and Addiction Plan 2006-2015; and Our Lives in 2014: A recovery vision from people with experience of mental illness.

### **The future of the 23 Big Issues project**

Following the 2010 Sydney TheMHS consumer day a 23 Big Issues working group was started by the organising committee and the group has meet monthly to consider the feedback from the many people who attended the 2010 consumer day. The background section on the 23 Big Issues and first four issues templates are being made available for distribution and further feedback from December 2011 on the TheMHS website [www.themhs.org](http://www.themhs.org).

As feedback from each of the 23 Big Issues are completed and signed off by the TheMHS management committee they are being uploaded to the TheMHS website for wider comments and ongoing

discussion. The working group is planning to have a final report ready for the 2013 Melbourne TheMHS Conference.

If you have others in your networks that have an interest in the 23 Big Issues please forward to them the link to this page.

This link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/23BigIssuesFeedback> will collect your comments on the new background section and the templates as they go online. Any comments will be considered for inclusion in the 23 Big Issues final report.

### **What are the 23 Big Issues?**

1. **Transport:** Transporting people with a mental illness to hospital by police.
2. **Seclusion:** People experiencing a mental illness being strip-searched and put in seclusion rooms when detained in psychiatric facilities
3. **Side Effects:** Mental health consumers having little or no choice of prescribed medication and the side-effects that result
4. **Accommodation:** Lack of choice, safety and support regarding accommodation for people with a mental illness
5. **Employment:** Lack of employment opportunities for those experiencing a mental illness
6. **Access:** When Unwell People with a mental illness having to be really unwell to access help
7. **Continuity of Care:** Continuity of care in the community and hospitals for people with a mental illness
8. **Choice of Therapist:** Lack of choice in type of therapist i.e. Alternative, Psychologist, OT, Peer Worker
9. **Rehabilitation:** Lack of worthwhile and appropriate rehabilitation.
10. **ECT:** Unfair and inappropriate Detention, Treatment and Administrative Orders to force treatment such as Electro-Convulsive Treatment (ECT).
11. **Unpaid Work:** Amount of unpaid work done by people with a mental illness
12. **Stigma:** Stigma from the family, community, workplace, police force, mental health service providers
13. **Lack of Information:** Lack of information given to consumers about their illness and legal rights
14. **Lack of Legislation:** Lack of legislation protecting mental health consumers
15. **Lack of Partnership:** Lack of true partnership in service delivery and tokenistic representation.
16. **Lack of Empowerment:** Lack of empowerment for mental

health consumers

17. **Rural and Remote:** Lack of mental health services in rural and remote areas.

18. **Management Plans:** Little or no involvement in management plans

19. **Support from Hospital:** Little support from hospital to home for people with a mental illness

20. **Access to Psychiatrists:** Lack of suitable access to psychiatrists

21. **Children of parents with MI:** Children of parents with a mental illness

22. **Young People:** Unique problems facing young people with a mental illness

23. **C.A.L.D:** Culturally and Linguistically diverse people experiencing a mental illness