

8.4.2 RESPONSE FROM VICTORIA GOVERNMENT



Minister for Health

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Mr John Mendoza
Chief Executive Officer
Mental Health Council of Australia
PO Box 174
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Dear Mr Mendoza

Thank you for your letter dated 24 March 2005 inviting States and Territories to provide a formal summary response for inclusion in the Mental Health and Human Rights draft report and detailed comments on the Victorian section.

Attached please find Victoria's response, based on the material that you have provided to date.

I understand that you have recently met with officers from the Victorian Mental Health Branch, who have raised some issues with you regarding the draft report. The key issues were:

- The emotive style of the title page;
- The lack of balancing information – while negative experiences can occur in any system, I believe that these should be considered relative to the number of positive experiences and other supporting information; and
- The absence of a chapter on the Commonwealth jurisdiction's responsibilities to people with mental disorders –including Medicare, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, private psychiatrists, General Practitioners, and vocational rehabilitation. Much of this information is currently contained in the state level sections.

At the meeting you were provided with copies of documents that were produced by the Victorian Department of Human Services to assist you in further developing the report. These documents were:

- Summaries of the 2003/04 surveys of consumer and carer experience of Victorian public mental health services;
- *Victorian strategy for safety and quality in public mental health services*;
- *Annual Report 2003: Office of the Chief Psychiatrist*;



- *Victoria's implementation of the national standards for mental health services; progress report September 2004; and,*
- *Caring Together: an action plan for carer involvement in Victorian public mental health services.*

Exemplar services in Victoria in the forensic and youth early psychosis areas, such as Thomas Embling Hospital and Orygen Youth Health, were also discussed at the meeting. Further, I would like to highlight the innovative service models that have been developed in Victoria in the areas of Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support, sub acute, primary mental health, and dual diagnosis service delivery. Victoria is recognised as a leader in these areas.

As I mentioned earlier in this letter, Victoria's written response to the draft report is based on the material that you have currently provided. Should you change the report, the response may require adjustment, and I would welcome the opportunity to revise the response.

I look forward to considering the next draft of the report.

Yours sincerely



**Hon Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Health**