ausMHLP
Australian Mental Health Leadership Program

WHY A LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IN MENTAL HEALTH?
Mental health professionals in Australia are trained to be excellent clinicians – among the best in the world. In the public health system particularly, many mental health professionals move into positions of considerable authority relatively early in their careers. Whatever position they occupy they are required to provide leadership and demonstrate high level management skills in a wide variety of settings. The leadership challenges in the Australian health system are many. They include:

- the multidisciplinary nature of the mental health workforce and the growing importance of effective team work;
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining high quality trainees from all of the mental health disciplines to the public system, and the implications of this for the future mental health workforce;
- the increasing organisational complexity of mental health services;
- the inadequate resources for high quality mental health care and the inevitable rationing that this implies;
- the continuing process of health system change and the opportunities for influencing the direction of such change;
- the need to enhance the focus on quality, effectiveness and safety; and
- the critical importance of improving collaboration with general medical services, primary health care, social care services, consumers and carers.

During the course of clinical training insufficient attention is paid to understanding the organisational and management issues in mental health care, the nature of mental health care systems, the political and social contexts of decision-making in relation to mental health services, and the development of leadership and management skills. Mental health professionals must be better prepared to assume leadership and management roles in the Australian mental health system.

ausMHLP offers great exposure to leading thinkers, researchers and policy makers in mental health, and excellent coverage of the broader scale of public mental health issues beyond the clinical realm - economic, political and historical.

The program has been motivating and inspiring.
Dr Stephanie Bradstock, Consultant Psychiatrist and 2005-06 ausMHLP participant

TEACHING AND LEARNING MODEL
Our teaching and learning model is based on the principles of knowledge translation and exchange. Practising leaders and managers need professional development that is tailored to personal learning needs and builds capacity to meet specific organisational challenges. Theoretical and research-based knowledge needs to be translated to meet the real world experience and agenda of learners. Practising leaders also have much valuable knowledge and experience to share or exchange with colleagues - knowledge and experience that is often uncodified or tacit. Drawing on the customised executive development approach of leading management schools such as the Said Business School at Oxford University, the curriculum delivered through the ausMHLP will be tailored to the needs of participants. Before the formal teaching program begins we will interview each participant to assess personal learning needs, views and understanding of key organisational and management issues facing mental health services, and ideas about a leadership or organisational development project that could be completed during the course of the year. Comprehensive needs assessment will help us translate our theoretical and empirical teaching material so that it connects in a meaningful way with participants’ experiences, and will help us to design interactive learning exercises that facilitate a vibrant exchange of knowledge between participants and course leaders throughout the program. Establishment of mechanisms for knowledge exchange around leadership and management of Australian mental health services is particularly vital because there has been very little research into the experiences and perspectives of mental health leaders and service managers in Australia.

ausMHLP addresses key areas of leadership, including:

- personal leadership styles, self-knowledge, and other capacities and skills that enhance leadership;
- the link between purpose and leadership – establishing a motivating and achievable vision for your organisation;
- the link between leadership and participation – empowering others to contribute to decision-making, and fostering leadership in others;

PROGRAM CONTENT
The intent of the Australian Mental Health Leadership Program (ausMHLP) is to fill a significant gap in the training of mental health professionals by developing the knowledge, skills and confidence of participants to perform leadership and management roles. Based on these foundations, the program is designed to stretch participants intellectually, opening them up to ways of thinking and working that they may not have previously encountered.
how the nature of organisational complexity and health sector change requires leadership at many levels;
leadership in mental health policy development and implementation;
the risks, challenges and opportunities of leadership.
In addition, ausMHLP introduces participants to important areas of health service management and organisational development and, and the links with leadership. Sample topics include:
models of management in the public sector and models that might best suit the key challenges facing mental health services;
organisational culture and climate – establishing a positive climate and a constructive culture; how they influence staff retention and performance, service quality and innovation, adoption of evidence-based practice, and clinical outcomes;
building effective teams, networks and partnerships – working across disciplines and organisational boundaries, working with consumers and carers;
organisational learning and change management.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE
ausMHLP is offered as a nine month, part-time professional development program. The program will be delivered in four intensive 3-day seminars and will combine:
formal didactic teaching of theory and synthesis of empirical research on leadership, management, and organisational development;
structured discussion of reading materials (provided in advance of each seminar);
presentations from, and discussion with, major national and state level leaders of mental health service development initiatives throughout Australia, based on their personal leadership experiences;
guided, structured, interactive reflection to connect formal teaching to participants’ experience, and build understanding and skills;
practical workshops tailored to the interests and work settings of individual participants, focusing on leadership and organisational development initiatives taking place in work places;
a two-day conference at which participants will have the opportunity to present the results and to discuss the implications of their projects with a wider group of mental health professionals.

The program is designed around small group interactive learning. Education and training focused on leadership and organisational development is most effective when it is delivered to teams or groups of individuals who can then develop and maintain transactive memory or learning systems within their organisations.
The aim of the projects is not necessarily to achieve successful completion by the end of the course, but to serve as a structured focus for learning through critical reflection, enabling application of theory to practice. Projects could involve, for example, the design, implementation and evaluation of a modest intervention, or an analysis of organisational readiness or capacity for a more ambitious program of change. The substantive focus will be on significant organisational challenges such as improving the responsiveness of services to cultural and linguistic diversity, developing mechanisms of genuine intersectoral collaboration, improving retention of high quality staff, and adoption and implementation of new evidence-based practices.

Preference will be given to:
- applications from teams of 3 or 4 participants from the one organisation whose participation in the program, including the carrying out of a system development project, is supported by the organisation’s senior management;
- applicants who have leadership and change management roles in key organisational development tasks to which senior management of the service is committed, such as directors of clinical services, team leaders, managers, quality managers, etc.

We urge State Directors of Mental Health and Directors of Area Mental Health Services to support their staff – from all relevant disciplines - to participate in this valuable program.

Applications should address the selection criteria for the program, give contact details for two referees (one of whom must be a current employer or supervisor) and provide a CV. (All application details are available at www.cimh.unimelb.edu.au/education/ausmhlp).

Applications must be received no later than 22 February 2008.

Notification of outcome of application will be no later than 7 March 2008.

**PROGRAM FEE**

The full cost of the 2008 program is $9,000 plus GST. This covers all tuition, project supervision, program materials, leadership assessment, a number of program dinners, and participation in the end of program conference.

The fee does not include travel, accommodation and other related expenses, and program participants will be responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

We will offer up to 10 part scholarships ($5,000) - in the form of reduction of program fee - to mental health professionals who are strong candidates for the program but do not have access to professional development funds.

**COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS**

The Australian Mental Health Leadership Program is a collaborative program of the following institutions:

- Centre for International Mental Health, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne
  www.cimh.unimelb.edu.au
- Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne
  www.psychiatry.unimelb.edu.au
- Barwon Health
  www.barwonhealth.or.au
- Brain and Mind Research Institute, University of Sydney
  www.bmri.med.usyd.edu.au
- Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research, University of Queensland
  www.qcmhr.uq.edu.au

For further information and application details, visit www.cimh.unimelb.edu.au/education/ausmhlp or contact the program coordinator, Dr Penny Mitchell, email: pennym@unimelb.edu.au. Tel: (03) 8344 0654 or Kerryann Bouzaid, email: kbouzaid@unimelb.edu.au on (03) 8344 0908.

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WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking for mental health professionals from all mental health disciplines who are committed to making a contribution to mental health in Australia at an organisational, system or policy level. Applicants should be currently working in formal management, clinical leadership, or other less formal organisational leadership roles in public mental health services in Australia, or intending to move into such a role in the future.

Applicants should be individuals who value good communication; display initiative and creativity in their professional lives and are able to see projects through to completion; are capable of self-reflection; and value teamwork.

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