

Chapter 3: Achievement of lower-level objectives associated with the establishment of MHPN which straddle all three areas of activity

Objective 1: Governance structures established

The governance structures of MHPN were established relatively early in the piece. MHPN is overseen by a Board, and receives advice from an Advisory Group. In addition, it has an Evaluation Committee and an Audit Committee which have specific roles in monitoring its progress.

MHPN's Board includes representatives of the key professional bodies and the Department of Health and Ageing, as well as several senior MHPN employees. MHPN's Board meets on a monthly basis. As outlined in MHPN's Governance Charter,¹⁴ the key responsibilities of the Board are to oversee all matters relating to the running of MHPN including setting goals, determining major operational policies and reviewing progress.

The Advisory Group acts as an expert resource to the activities of MHPN. The Advisory Group meets quarterly to provide feedback on and make recommendations about planning and delivery of training and education workshops, establishment and maintenance of ongoing networks, ongoing revision of materials, independent project evaluation, usability of the web portal, and consultation with key stakeholder groups. The Advisory Group is chaired by John McGrath, the Chair of MHPN. Advisory Group members include representatives from different professional groups, the Department of Health and Ageing, consumers and carers (via the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum) and the Mental Health Council of Australia.

The Evaluation Committee meets monthly to advise on the evaluation progress. It consists of two MHPN directors, one member of the Advisory Group, two external members and a Department of Health and Ageing representative.

The Audit Committee meets monthly. The Audit Committee is responsible for overseeing the annual audit, monitoring of the financial and control systems, advising the Board on the approval of the annual financial statements and recommending the appointment of an external auditor to the Board.

Objective 2: MHPN's infrastructure, structures, processes, staff, materials and brand established

MHPN's infrastructure, structures, processes, staff, materials and brand were put in place early in the life of MHPN, although some elements of these have been modified as the activities of MHPN have become more established. Two examples are provided here.

In September 2008, MHPN appointed four managers, each of whom was responsible for a different portfolio (Finance, National Project, Office and Evaluation). In April 2009, a fifth manager was appointed to oversee the Communications portfolio. This structure has remained in place since then. All five managers report to the Chief Executive Officer who, in turn, reported to MHPN's Board of Directors. Senior Project Officers are responsible for different geographical locations and different professional bodies, and each reports to the National Project Manager. During the establishment and delivery phases of MHPN, Project Officers played a significant role in organizing and implementing the workshops. The Project Officers reported to the Senior Project Officers. The core of this structure has remained consistent over time, but

the roles of some of the relevant parties have changed as MHPN has moved into its sustainability phase. When this happened, Project Officers became Network Sustainability Project Officers. They still report to the Senior Project Officers, but their role has shifted to supporting ongoing interdisciplinary networks as they emerge. Other roles have also been added to MHPN's staffing structure over time, including administrative support for teams, and a Communications Co-ordinator who works with the Communication Manager. MHPN's overall staff numbers have increased substantially over time (from about 10 to over 30).

Early marketing materials and standard communications from MHPN to professional groups and mental health professionals focused on defining MHPN's purpose, the role of initial workshops and the benefits of participation for mental health professionals. By late 2009, MHPN had refined its message, with an increasing focus on the importance of networks. Continual communications in publications like the Australian Psychological Society's *InPsych* have promoted MHPN's achievements at different points in its trajectory.