

Mental Health Council Welcomes New Chair

20 February 2012

The Mental Health Council of Australia is pleased to announce the appointment of Jennifer Westacott as Chair of its Board.

Ms Westacott has been Chief Executive Officer at the Business Council of Australia since 2011 and was previously a Senior Partner at KPMG. She has extensive policy experience in both the public and private sectors and has over 20 years' experience in leadership positions in the New South Wales and Victorian Governments, including as Director of Housing and Secretary of Education and Training in Victoria. Ms Westacott led a major review of the NSW Health system in 2000, entitled the Health Council Report. Jennifer was also a Commissioner on the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

"As our new Chair, Jennifer holds the qualities our Board was looking for, including her ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders, business and industry, governments and our broader membership in pursuing the MHCA's strategic agenda in mental health," CEO of MHCA, Frank Quinlan said.

"Jennifer's considerable experience and connections across the private sector will be of great benefit to the MHCA, particularly as we face a growing recognition of the difficulties faced by people with mental health issues in the workplace," Mr Quinlan said.

Ms Westacott thanked outgoing MHCA Chair, The Hon Rob Knowles, for his outstanding contributing to mental health during his past six years as Chair.

"I know that Rob has been instrumental in keeping mental health at the forefront of Australia's health agenda, and I'm extremely honoured that the Mental Health Council of Australia has given me the opportunity to continue this important work," Ms Westacott said.

Mr Knowles, who is standing down as Chair after a long period of service, says he is leaving the organisation in good hands.

"Over the past eight years I have seen the Council's good work and influence grow considerably, and across Australia the focus on mental health has never been stronger. I am confident that Jennifer will ensure we maintain our agenda to ensure that the lives of people affected by mental illness are much improved as a result of our work."

Ms Westacott will commence in her role as Chair from 5 March, 2013. She is an independent member of the MHCA Board.

For further information or comment contact: Frank Quinlan, CEO, Mental Health Council of Australia on 0409 655 460.