



PRIVACY KIT FOR MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR

The Mental Health Privacy Coalition (MHPC) today launched a Privacy Kit to guide mental health consumers, carers and providers through the detail of the *Federal Privacy Act*.

The MHPC comprises the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA).

MHPC Chair, Dr Bill Pring, said the kit would make the *Federal Privacy Act* easier to understand for everyone concerned with mental health.

“It will allow practitioners to deal with highly sensitive clinical information without fear of breaching the Act or betraying the trust of their patients,” Dr Pring said.

“Rather than the *Act* being misunderstood as a hindrance, we are suggesting ways it can be integrated into mental health practice, and maybe even enhance it.

“It is a user-friendly kit that offers practical solutions to even the most problematic privacy concerns surrounding mental health.

“Mental health and psychiatric information is some of the most sensitive information given by patients to health providers.

“When people consult with private psychiatrists, or if they need private psychiatric hospital admission, they believe their private communications will be kept strictly confidential.

“Appropriate handling of confidential mental health information has always been a high priority for private sector mental health providers. Our kit will protect the interests of patients and the providers of their mental health care.”

Dr Pring said the MHPC is indebted to the Federal Privacy Commissioner and his Officers for their help and advice in compiling the kit.

The Privacy Kit can be obtained online from the website:

<http://www.spgpps.com/Documents/mhpkit.pdf>

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