



Australian Divisions of **General Practice**

**CONSULTATION PAPERS
NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PLAN 2003-2008**

I am writing to invite your written comment on the draft *ADGP Mental Health Policy Statement - Primary Mental Health Care in Australia: The Next Ten Years*. A copy is attached for your consideration.

The next 2-3 months is a critical time for activity in primary mental health care. Health Ministers are developing a new mental health policy and plan for Australia for 2003-2008. These two documents are important because they will determine government priorities and funding allocations for mental health over the next five years.

It is vital that the role of Divisions and general practice in primary mental health care delivery is prominently placed in future mental health policy and plans.

Recognising that 75 per cent of those who seek help go to their GP first and that the burden of disease associated with mental health morbidity is projected to grow representing ongoing demand for GP services, ADGP has always strongly advocated that primary care to be a key part of the new mental health policy and plan.

A National Summit will be held on 2 May involving key national peak organisations. This is the only major national consultation forum to inform the new policy and plan before it is considered by Ministers mid-year. To participate in the Summit and provide a robust sense of mental health priorities for Divisions and general practice, it is important that ADGP is informed by your views.

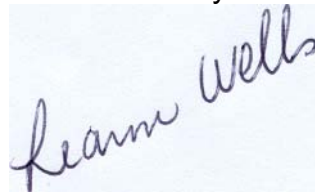
As a basis for the workshop, the AHMAC National Mental Health Working Group has released the *Consultation Paper on the National Mental Health Plan 2003-2008*. A copy is attached. The draft *Mental Health Policy Statement* has been developed by ADGP as a response.

Please forward your comments on ADGP's *Mental Health Policy Statement* to me by **Monday 28 April 2003** on lwells@adgp.com.au or by telephone (02) 6228 0854. Specific comments on the AHMAC Consultation Paper are also welcome.

While the timeframe for feedback is short, I would be grateful if you give the paper some of your time so that ADGP is well placed to represent Divisions and your interests at the Summit.

A final version of the ADGP *Mental Health Policy Statement* will be posted on our website in early May once all comments have been consolidated and incorporated. We will use this as the basis of our input to the Summit and wider consultation throughout 2003 about the challenges and opportunities for future primary mental health care reform. Based on what we find, ADGP will refine the ideas in the paper and provide governments with recommendations for a ten-year Agenda for Primary Mental Health Care.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leanne Wells". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a light blue rectangular background.

Leanne Wells
Principal Adviser, Mental Health
Australian Divisions of General Practice
1 April 2003