Welcome to the Summer edition of the WA Centre for Mental Health Policy Research newsletter. This edition gives an update of some of our activities over the past months and key policy and health service issues we will be working on in 2012.

After finalising the Review of RuralLink and the Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL) in 2011, the coming year will see the Centre commencing the Evaluation of the Statewide Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Services (SSAMHS) and completing the Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) project, which examines the benefits of EIP programs compared with standard mental health treatments.

Recently I was honoured to have been awarded a Churchill Fellowship which will enable me to travel to the UK and Europe in April to investigate the shift towards personalisation in mental health services through self-directed support. I will be meeting with service providers and policy experts to learn about this approach and consider how it could be applied in WA.

Theresa Williams
Associate Professor
Review of RuralLink and the Mental Health Emergency Response Line

The Centre has completed a Review of the effectiveness of RuralLink and MHERL.

The Review involved research and consultation with a range of stakeholders, including specialist mental health services, Emergency Department staff, Government and non-government organisations, the Police, ambulance services and consumers and carers. Consultations were held with providers in the regional areas of Albany, Kalgoorlie, Broome and Bunbury as well as interviews through videoconferencing to hospitals in more remote locations. Interviews were also conducted with providers in other States to investigate innovative models being implemented in rural and remote mental health services.

A workshop was held in July 2011 with regional and metropolitan mental health services and the Mental Health Commission to discuss the draft findings of the Review. The final report was submitted in December 2011 to the Mental Health Operations Review Committee (MH-ORC).

New staff member joins the Centre

Anita Lumbus recently began in the role of Research Officer at the Centre. Anita will be providing research support for the Evaluation of SSAMHS and other Centre projects.

Anita has a background in research, policy and project management. Her previous experience encompasses organisations such as the Research Centre for Stronger Communities at Curtin University and the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre based in Melbourne.

Anita’s postgraduate qualifications include a Master of Human Rights Practice degree and a Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing and Presentation. She is currently undertaking further study in social research and evaluation at Murdoch University.

Anita Lumbus