

Media statement

31 March 2015

Funds for eating disorder program

The Department of Health must give a higher priority to resourcing state-wide services which includes support for people with eating disorders in its Services Plan to be developed this year.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck confirmed Commission funding of almost \$50,000 to a Brisbane centre to deliver mentor and meal support training and a wellbeing program for young people with eating issues.

A recent report by the Butterfly Foundation highlighted the number of young Queenslanders with an eating disorder. The figures reported were consistent with other research that indicates the prevalence of eating disorders in Australia has doubled in the past decade.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck said: "Similar to other mental illnesses, there needs to be better resourcing, integration and state-wide accessibility to quality community-based support services to keep people out of hospital, help them transition from hospital back to home, and maintain their recovery."

Through the QMHC's 2015 Community Wellbeing Enhancement Initiative, a grant of \$49,735 has been provided to Brisbane-based *ISIS–The Eating Issues Centre Inc.* for support services to young people.

ISIS–The Eating Issues Centre works with people aged over 16 with serious eating issues such as anorexia, bulimia and compulsive eating.

Amanda Dearden, Coordinator of *Isis–The Eating Issues Centre* said: "Recovery from eating issues is possible and high mortality rates can be reduced through increased access to community support programs that build capacity to respond to increased prevalence and demand for eating disorders services in Queensland."

"This funding supports the *Isis-Mentor* and Meal Support Training that enables recovery-orientated mentoring, restoring of hope and reconnection to the community and making a real difference in people's lives."

Dr van Schoubroeck applauded the courage shown by the many who have spoken out about their illness.

"Speaking out is an important step in reducing the stigma associated with eating disorders, getting people to understand and prompting others to seek help."

"Eating disorders affect men too. Studies suggest that up to a quarter of people suffering with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa are male, and almost an equal number of males and females suffer with binge eating disorder," Dr van Schoubroeck said.

The Queensland Mental Health Commission recently announced funding of just over \$500,000 for local level community wellbeing enhancement, awareness and capacity building activities as part of its *Stronger Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program*.