



Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council regional visit West Moreton and Darling Downs, Queensland (2-3 October 2019)

COMMUNIQUE

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council welcomed attendance by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, the Honourable Steven Miles MP at their 2 October 2019 Council meeting in West Moreton.

The meeting was convened during their visit to the West Moreton and the Darling Downs regions. The Council members were accompanied by the Mental Health Commissioner and Executive Director.

Council meeting discussion highlights

Meeting with the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, the Honourable Steven Miles MP

The Council raised several matters with the Minister that included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders social and emotional wellbeing, refugee health and wellbeing, harm minimisation strategy for illicit drugs, and recovery-oriented and least restrictive care in acute mental health wards.

The Council acknowledged the Minister for his role with the recent appointment of Queensland's inaugural Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer, Ms Haylene Grogan.

The Council was keen to discuss with the Minister how Ms Grogan's role in leading the development and delivery of Queensland Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policies and programs will influence and interact with the broader mental health system and services; and expressed their interest in inviting Ms Grogan to a future Council meeting.

West Moreton Health - Prison Health Services and Prison Mental Health Services presentation

A presentation by representatives from West Moreton Health Prison Health Services team and Prison Mental Health Services team provided the Council members with an overview of the Prison Health's continuity of care that they provide across nine correctional centres facilities.

The Council was interested to hear about some of the significant challenges experienced— high level of comorbidity issues; higher rates of mental health issues for female prisoners; supporting staff with vicarious trauma; and supporting digital data collection with limited technology access.

The Council acknowledged with concern how the current prisoner health facilities (originally built for a smaller prison population) have not been expanded to accommodate the growing increase of population and how the infrastructure impacts the provision of primary health care and mental health services.

The Prison Health Services and Prison Mental Health Services teams were commended for their outstanding commitment under challenging workplace conditions.

Implementation update for the Shifting Minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Strategic Plan 2018-2023

The Council was provided with an update on the current work underway with the development of the *Shifting minds* Roadmap and Evaluation and Monitoring Framework.

The Council acknowledged the recent launch of *Every life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2029* (*Every life*) on World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September 2019) by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services; and discussed *Every life's* priority areas and implementation approach.

The Council discussed the progress being made with the development of the renewed Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan, including some of the findings from the recent strategic conversations and Key Consultation Group meetings.

The Commission sought the Council's views regarding the approach for the development of the renewed Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan in relation to the longer-term vision and approach.

Darling Downs community events

Across the two-day visit, the Council hosted several events – including an informal networking dinner with representatives from the local mental health and alcohol and other drugs sector, a meeting hosted by the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network, and a presentation from the Stretch2Engage Toowoomba Consortium partners.

In addition, the Council also had an opportunity to visit two local non-government organisations – Toowoomba Clubhouse and the Vanguard Laundry Services.

Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network meeting

The Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network's Chief Executive, Ms Merrilyn Strohfeldt, and Senior Manager Commissioning Services, Ms Jennifer Inglis hosted a meeting with the Council and representatives from [RFQ-Recovered Futures](#) and [EACH](#) to discuss some of the new suicide prevention and child and youth services for the region. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss some of the current emerging issues for the region.

Stretch2Engage Toowoomba Consortium presentation

The Council appreciated the commitment and openness displayed by the Stretch2Engage Toowoomba consortium representatives – Toowoomba Clubhouse, Sunrise Way and Darling Downs Hospital and Health Services when sharing some of the learnings from the Stretch2Engage initiative pilot.

The Council was interested in hearing about their experiences with the pilot and evaluating the efficacy of the Stretch2Engage Framework within their mental health and alcohol and other drug service settings. The group shared with Council some of benefits and key findings of the project, that included the authorising environment to support meaningful and robust relationships, and the positive impact for their agencies in supporting their client's service navigating experiences.

The Chief Executive Officer from the Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (QNADA) - Ms Rebecca Lang, also attended the meeting and shared her perspectives as one of the three partners overseeing the pilot project.

The Council was interested to hear how the Stret2Engage pilot has played a role in increasing capacity for engaging with people accessing their services. The consortium members were commended by the Council for their commitment and outstanding contributions with the pilot.

Toowoomba Clubhouse site visit

The Toowoomba Clubhouse Chief Executive Officer, Ms Debbie Bailey generously provided the Council with a private tour of the Clubhouse's services. The visit provided an opportunity for the Council to meet and chat with the Toowoomba Clubhouse's onsite staff and members and enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by the members.

The Council was interested to hear how the Toowoomba Clubhouse model supports adults with a lived experience of mental illness by focussing on maintaining and enhancing an environment that supports the individual's mental health recovery through participation, supported education, peer led activities, self-directed planning and supported goal setting and housing. They were particularly interested in Toowoomba Clubhouse's partnership with the local social enterprises Ability Enterprise and Vanguard Laundry Services and its work readiness transitioning program.

The Council was provided with an overview of the Toowoomba Clubhouse's weekly program, designed to assist the person in identifying and achieving their personal mental health recovery goals - relating to life skills, education, employment, building social connections.

Vanguard Laundry site visit

The Council had an opportunity to visit the Toowoomba based Vanguard Laundry Services, a social enterprise commercial laundry, that has been established to create employment opportunities for people previously excluded from the workforce, predominately due to mental health conditions.

Vanguard Laundry Service's Social Impact Manager, Harry Sillett and several staff members provided the Council with an overview of the Laundry's successful in-house career development centre that primarily supports disadvantaged jobseekers with sustainable local career, training and career development opportunities.

The Council were interested to hear how the innovative social enterprise, launched by the Toowoomba Clubhouse, builds on the success of another local not-for-profit, social enterprise [Ability Enterprises](#), that provides meaningful employment opportunities to marginalised individuals living in regional Queensland.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Council is planned to be held during the Council's visit to Rockhampton on 4-6 December 2019.

If you have any enquiries relating to the communique, please contact the Council Secretariat via email at: council@qmhc.qld.gov.au.

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