

Queensland Mental Health Consumer Representative Peak Establishment Project Steering Committee Communique

2 December 2020

The seventh meeting of the Queensland Mental Health Consumer Representative Peak Project Steering Committee focused on making decisions about the organisation's membership structure and election of the board of directors. The Project Steering Committee discussed, and advised on, the content of the Board Governance Manual.

Acknowledgement

The Queensland Mental Health Commission (the Commission) acknowledges all people who have personal experience of mental ill-health. We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge the many organisations, service providers and community members who work in partnership with us and who generously share their views, knowledge, and expertise. Your voices are all essential to our work.

Progress to date

It has been a busy seven months for the Project Steering Committee (Committee). The diligence and industriousness of all the people involved in this work has meant the project to establish the mental health consumer representative peak (the new peak) is on track and meeting its milestones! As the year draws to a close, this is a great time to take stock of everything that has been achieved to date:

- The consumer peak's draft constitution is close to being finalised. One of the primary roles of the organisation is to work to provide policy advice and system advocacy for, and with, Queensland mental health system consumers of all ages, based on the principles of equity, access, cultural-safety, recovery, and human rights.
- The draft constitution states the board will consist of seven directors, the majority with both a lived experience and the learned skills to govern the organisation. A strategy to recruit the right people to these positions is currently underway and the positions will be advertised before Christmas.
- Much of the Board Governance Manual has now been shaped following December's Committee meeting. The manual sets out the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the board, the board chair, directors, committees, and Lived Experience Advisory Group. Once finalised, the Board Governance Manual will inform the development of a Management Governance and Operations Manual. This will be the full suite of policies and procedures for the operations of the new peak.

Turning our attention to 2021, it is anticipated the new peak's interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and board of directors will be in position by first half of the year and the new peak will be operational during the latter part of the year.

Lived experience voice and building on past learnings

The Queensland Mental Health Commission has led by example with its on-going commitment to lived experience engagement. This project has been managed by a lived experience project team and the work to establish the consumer peak has been driven by a Committee with substantial lived experience expertise.

Consumers, carers, families, and other stakeholders who participated in consultations leading-up to this project clearly articulated a need for an organisation that is forward thinking, ready to be innovative and inclusive, and works for consumers, with consumers. What was learnt during these initial consultations has informed this project's approach and the Committee's decision-making.

The new peak is being established by consumers, for consumers, with consumers, and it is hoped this principle will permeate every aspect of the company's work once it is operational.

On being brave, ambitious, and practical

The long-term success of the new peak requires a strong foundation. The rules in a company's corporate governance framework need to be purposeful and give the organisation stability, yet at the same time they must allow for flexibility, innovation, and growth. One of the challenges the Committee has continually grappled with is balancing the need to do things differently (to disrupt the status quo) with the need to ensure the lasting success and sustainability of the organisation. The Committee has always given due care and consideration to the needs of the organisation, and has also been brave and put consumer-need at the centre of the decisions it has made.

Get involved

Are you interested in taking a leadership role in the future of the new Queensland mental health consumer representative peak? With the constitution almost completed, processes to recruit the inaugural board are currently being developed with the aim of advertising these positions before Christmas. Details will be published on the Queensland Mental Health Commission's consumer peak webpage soon. Watch this space!

Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 3 February 2021.

Keep up to date

Regular project updates can be found in Queensland Mental Health Commission's [consumer peak webpage](#) or by subscribing to the [eNews](#).

The Project Steering Committee or the project team can be contacted by email on ConsumerPeak@gmhc.qld.gov.au.

Note: the email account is not monitored outside business hours.