



Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council Meeting Brisbane – 15 June 2023

COMMUNIQUE

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council (the Council) met in Brisbane on 15 June 2023. The Council welcomed the announcement of a new Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman.

Meeting highlights

Report from the Commissioner

The Commissioner tabled the two draft plans - *Shifting minds: Queensland mental health, alcohol and other drugs Strategic Plan 2023-2028* and *Phase Two of Every Life: Queensland's suicide prevention Strategic Plan Phase 2*, and associated consultation reports.

The Commissioner provided an update on the implementation of *Achieve balance*. Implementation of *Achieving balance* is supported by an Achieving Balance Strategic Implementation Group and overseen by the *Shifting Minds* Strategic Leadership Group. The Achieving Balance Strategic Implementation Group has met three times and the focus of the meetings has included:

- Introduction to the role and function of the Strategic Implementation Group
- Overview of the initiatives under *Achieving balance* and funding allocated under the *Better Care Together AOD outside the health system* work package
- Mapping of current and planned activity and identification of gaps.

The Commission provided an update on each of the Parliamentary Inquiry recommendations that they are progressing;

- Recommendation 5: Public campaign to reduce stigma
- Recommendation 6: Whole of government Trauma Strategy
- Recommendation 19: Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (with Health & Wellbeing Qld)
- Recommendation 54: Expand and regulate Queensland's lived experience (peer) workforce

Locked Wards

The Council was provided with an update on the issue of located wards. The Commission and Advisory Council have been advocating for a review of Queensland's locked wards since 2013. The Council noted that Queensland Health has advised they are trialling local decision-making regarding locked adult mental health inpatient wards at three Hospital and Health Services, to move toward no longer mandating the locking of wards in 2024.

The Council was updated that Professor Neeraj Gill has provided the second progress report on his research "Identifying reasons behind the increase in involuntary psychiatric treatment in Queensland". The next steps are semi-structured interviews with service users and carers.

The Council noted that the Commission has joined the Restorative Just and Learning Culture Steering Committee (RJLC) led by the Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch. The initial scope of the

RJLC Steering Committee is to support and guide planning for a RJLC Workshop for senior leaders within MHAOD services on 22 June 2023.

Queensland Mental Health Commission First Nations Strategy

The Council was provided with an update on the Commission's First Nations-focused program of work, noting that all staff will be participating in cultural capability training in July 2023. Following an action item from the previous meeting the Commission provided a Path to Treaty options paper with the recommendation for a Cultural Capability Action Plan. The Council accepted this recommendation.

The Council noted that the Department of Housing has commenced work on a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan. It will include a call for submissions, yarning circles, a survey, and meetings with targeted stakeholders. The Commission will make a submission to support the development and promotion of the Action Plan. The Council agreed for a Department of Housing representative to attend a future Advisory Council meeting to hear the outcomes of the consultation and provide input into phase two consultations.


The Voice Referendum

The Council noted the impact the Voice referendum and its result would have on the community. The Council noted the Federal Government funding to increase mental health support for First Nations people during the referendum. The Council recommended that the Commission consider publicly supporting the yes vote at the upcoming Voice Referendum.

General update

Other discussions included:

- The Better Care Together Assurance Committee.
- Issues arising from including opioid replacement therapy on the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme, which would have a flow-on effect for private clinics.
- Recent media coverage of incidents of people with mental health issues leaving hospital and either committing violent acts or dying by suicide.
- Issues relating to people having trouble accessing housing following hospital admissions for drug use and beds not being available. Council members agreed more community services need to be made available. The Chair noted that the Gold Coast crisis stabilisation service is working on a referral pathway from QAS and QPS directly, rather than the current pathway from the Emergency Department.
- Council member Paul Martin noted the Bilateral funding will provide additional funds for universal aftercare, adult mental health centres and two children's centres in Brisbane and the Gold Coast with additional funding for psychosocial funding for community organisations.
- The Council discussed issues surrounding prescribing of medicinal cannabis and psilocybin. Members discussed opportunities for the Commission to advocate for greater regulation of cannabis and psilocybin.
- The Council noted that the Federal Government was undertaking a review of both the Better Access Program and the NDIS, with the future of psychosocial funding is unclear.
- The Council discussed concerns around school-aged children increasingly presenting with eating disorders, as well as issues with social media and suicidal ideation in children as young as 7-10 years. Parents and schools are struggling with these issues with no clear referral pathway or supports. The Chair noted that there are increased rates of young Indigenous children entering child protection services, and females being incarcerated.
- Council member Jane Williams provided an update on current issues at Longreach impacting the community such as cost of living pressures and the relatively higher cost of rural food.

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- The Council discussed concerns that preparations for the Olympics in Brisbane may result in displacement of people in short-term housing.

Next meeting

The next meeting is proposed for 1 or 4 September at the Gold Coast HHS.