

Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council Meeting

14 October 2014 Brisbane, Australia

Meeting Communique

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council convened their fourth meeting in Brisbane on Tuesday, 14 October 2014. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Chair Jan Kealton. Council Chair Professor Harvey Whiteford was at the sixty-fifth session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Manila. He was invited to give a presentation on the large and rising burden of mental and substance use disorders in the region.

The Council was delighted to have the Minister for Health attend their council meeting.

Members were also pleased to hear from the State's first Queensland Health Ombudsman, Mr Leon Atkinson-MacEwen on his role. They were interested to hear that people with mental health issues are less likely to complain than the general population. The Council will further discuss ways in which they can promote the role of the Health Ombudsman and increase consumer awareness of the complaints process.

The Council meeting predominantly focused on directions for least restrictive practices in acute mental health wards including locked wards, social housing for people with complex needs, and future planning to prevent and reduce the adverse impact of drug and alcohol use. The discussions were supported by the attendance of Commission staff Carmel Ybarlucea, Nic Hunter and Shane Martin.

The Council commended the work of members Dr Christian Rowan and Luke Terry. Christian has been the driving force in making the School of Hard Knocks a reality in Queensland. It was launched on 10 October 2014. Luke has been a key driver in the organisation of the Social and Economic Procurement Forum to be held on 17 October 2014. This is the first official step in the implementation of *Shared Commitment 4 in the Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan*.

They also commended the Commission on the recent launch of the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan* and the Commission's first Annual Report. The Council looks forward to providing ongoing input to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Council members Jan Kealton, Debbie Spink and Ailsa Rayner presented to the Council learnings from their recent attendance at the Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference held in Perth.

Committee updates

The revised Consumer, Family and Carer Committee 2014-15 work plan and priorities were endorsed by the Council. The priorities focus on establishing best practice principles in consumer, family and carer engagement and conducting a state-wide mapping of the type, level and range of consumer, family and carer engagement across public, private and NGO mental health and AOD sectors.

The Council agreed to expand the membership of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee membership to include Mr Shane Duffy, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

Approach to the drug and alcohol action plan

The Council endorsed members Mr Mitchell Giles and Dr Christian Rowan to work with the Commission on the implementation of *Shared Commitment 3.3: to prevent and reduce the adverse impact of alcohol and drugs on the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders*. Council was pleased to note that the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Services was keen to take a lead role in this project.

Least restrictive practice and locked wards

The report *Least restrictive practices in acute mental health wards including consideration of locked doors: Facilitated forums and options for the future* was submitted by the University of Melbourne. The report recommended options for the future reform based on a literature review and consultations with consumers, families and carers and hospital staff.

Based on the recommended options, the Commission has developed recommendations for implementing least restrictive practices in acute mental health wards including locked wards. The Council supported the recommendations proposed by the Commission to be provided to the Department of Health, the Director of Mental Health and the Minister for Health.

Council also requested the Commission to consider how it might review the extent to which these recommendations will be implemented in 12 months time. The Council is committed to ensuring it exercises its influence to eliminate any locking of wards that is not in the best interest of consumers, consistent with recovery oriented practice.

The Commission expects to make its recommendations to the Director of Mental Health publicly available in late 2014 or early 2015.

Social housing

The Commission's first Ordinary Report will outline recommendations relating to the social housing needs of people living with mental illness, those experiencing mental health difficulties and problematic substance use (tenants with complex needs) and the impact of the Anti-Social Behaviour Management Policy (ASB Policy).

The Council commended the Commission for its careful and considered approach to this project including the *Review of systemic issues for social housing clients with complex needs* report developed by the Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland on behalf of the Commission.

The Council strongly supported the recommendations for inclusion in the Ordinary Report. The Commission thanked Kingsley Bedwell, Brenda Happell and Harvey Whiteford for their contribution to the proposed recommendations

Delivering of the Vision

Council agreed that its effectiveness will be measured in relation to its contribution to the achievement of Queensland's vision for mental health, drug and alcohol:

A healthy and inclusive community where people living with mental illness or problems with substance use have a life with purpose and access to quality care and support focused on wellness and recovery in an understanding, empathic and compassionate society.

Council members noted that in the recent survey by the Commission, while almost half the respondents were unable to comment on the effectiveness of the Advisory Council, over a third agreed that the Council is providing effective advice on reform. Effectiveness of the Council will continue to be monitored using this measure and members individually and collectively agreed to seek to strengthen the capacity of the Commission to build partnerships and provide credible advice.

Next Council Meeting

The final 2014 meeting for the Council is scheduled for 2 December 2014.