

## Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council

### Meeting Communiqué

#### 17 February 2017

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The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council met in Brisbane on Friday, 17 February 2017. The meeting agenda was primarily focused on supports available for families involved with Coronial inquests, and the [Hunter Institute of Mental Health's](#) Mindframe National Media Initiative and Conversations Matter projects.

The Council welcomed the attendance of the following guest presenters: Deputy State Coroner John Lock and Ms Jaelea Skehan, Director, Hunter Institute of Mental Health.

#### **Support for families involved with Coronial inquiries**

Deputy State Coroner Lock accepted the Commission's invitation to discuss supports available for families involved in coronial inquiries, including an update on the work currently being undertaken in partnership with LawRight (formerly QPILCH) and the Bar Association of Queensland to develop a pro-bono representation scheme for families not eligible to receive legal aid.

The Council found the presentation by Deputy Coroner Lock very informative, and noted with concern that specialist advice previously provided by Queensland Health on inquiries examining mental health treatment has not been able to be provided since 2012.

The Council asked the Commission to follow up with the Chief Psychiatrist, Queensland Health, to explore how mental health advice previously provided by Queensland Health can be reinstated to support the coronial process.

#### **Mindframe Initiative program**

The [Hunter Institute of Mental Health's](#) work was recognised by the World Health Organisation in 2014 as the leading international authority in communication around suicide, having managed the Mindframe program for 18 years, and subsequently establishing the 'Conversations Matter' in 2013.

The Council appreciated Ms Skehan's presentation on 'Communicating about mental illness and suicide', in particular the Hunter Institute of Mental Health's work in improving media coverage of suicide and mental illness. The Council was very interested in hearing about the Mindframe National Media Initiative training and education programs that encourage responsible and accurate representation of mental illness and suicide in the media.

The Council acknowledged Hunter Institute of Mental Health for their excellent work in improving media coverage of suicide and mental illness, and agreed there should be future consideration by Council for strategies to support better engagement of the media for communicating and influencing community attitudes.

## Other issues discussed

1. **Update on the renewal of the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019***—The Council was provided with an overview of the Commission’s activity and planning to date in relation to the renewal of the [Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014-2019](#) and the three [Action Plans](#). The Council supported the proposed consultation approach, including discussion of results to date of stakeholder consultations at the 21 April 2017 Council meeting, and dedicating the 16 June 2017 Council meeting to a formal facilitated consultation on the renewal of the Strategic Plan and update of the Action Plans.
2. **Monitoring and reporting on the Strategic Plan**—The Council was pleased to note the public release of the [Annual Implementation Report 2015–16](#), the [Performance Indicators Report December 2016](#), and the strategic plan reporting [dashboard](#).
3. **Supporting social outcomes through employment**— The Council congratulated former Council member, [Mr Luke Terry](#) and the Toowoomba Clubhouse on their recent public launch of the Vanguard Laundry by the Prime Minister, the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull MP. The Vanguard Laundry will offer employment for people with mental health issues returning to the workforce.
4. **Apology to survivors** —The Council commended the Commissioner for raising this issue, and noted their appreciation of the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, and Mr Michael Walsh, Director-General, Department of Health for the acknowledgement that there has been an unacceptable delay in consulting with people affected since the government’s apology on 24 March 2010. The Council acknowledged that events such as this reinforce the importance of external oversight of all institutions where people are involuntary detained. The Council noted that the Australian Government has now agreed to [ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture](#) (OPCAT) and have requested the Commissioner make further enquiries as to how oversight of psychiatric hospitals will be addressed.
5. **Congratulations to Acting Chair**—The outgoing Acting Chair, Ms Jan Kealton was congratulated on receiving the Metro North Hospital and Health Service Australia Day award for ‘*excellence in improving mental health care from the collective wisdom of consumers and carers for the consumers, carers and families that use the Metro North Hospital and Health Service*’.

## Acknowledgement for outgoing Deputy Chair and members

The terms of four Council members expire on the 23 February 2017. The Commissioner formally acknowledged the Deputy Chair, Ms Jan Kealton, and members Mr Kingsley Bedwell, Mr Etienne Roux, and Mr Mitchell Giles for their contributions to the work of the Commission and the Council during their three year term at their last meeting.

The Council was informed that the Office of Health and Statutory Agencies, Queensland Health has advised that applications for new appointments have been received and will be finalised in due course.



## Emerging risks to Queensland reforms

Members identified further important issues for consideration:

- **Implementation of Independent Patient Rights Advisors**—The Council noted the employment of IPRA's in Metro South and Metro North at Level 3 of The SCHAADS Award inconsistent with the spirit and requirements of the Act and the functions and responsibilities of the roles. The Council requested its concerns be documented and urged the Commissioner to request the Implementation Committee, chaired by Dr John Wakefield, to review and monitor the initiative to ensure all IPRA's are sufficiently qualified and skilled to fulfil their functions outlined in the Act and as intended by the Chief Psychiatrist policy.'
- **Submission on the Fifth Mental Health Plan**—The Council was pleased that the Mental Health Commissions were consulted on the redrafting of the Plan and will have further input to the final draft in April 2017. The Council asked the Commissioner to formally raise the limited scope of the current draft, including consideration as to how to maximise the potential for private providers to contribute. The Council noted that people attending private hospitals have limited access to support in their community with State funds increasingly being dedicated only to consumers in the public health system.
- **National Disability Insurance Scheme funding update**—The Council commended Mr Michael Walsh, Director-General, Department of Health and his officers on their responsiveness to the concerns raised by the sector, regarding the need for continued support for people with mental health issues during the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Council was pleased to note that the Department of Health shares the Council's view that there is need for continued access to support people who are not eligible for an NDIS package, and that there is an awareness of the impact on the capacity of non-government organisations to maintain services with potential delays in NDIS funding.

## Next meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be on Friday, 21 April 2017. The meeting agenda will include the results from the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019* renewal community consultations.

For any enquiries relating to the Communique please contact the Council Secretariat:

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