

Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council

Meeting Communiqué

19 October 2015

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council convened their tenth meeting at South Brisbane on 19 October 2015. The focus for the meeting was mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.

The Council welcomed the attendance of Ms Helen Glover who was invited to contribute to the discussions owing to her experience in transforming practices and processes that align with lived experience of mental illness, and a recovery /resilient oriented focus.

Focus on mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention

Better promotion, prevention and early intervention is one of the four pillars of reform outlined in the [Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014—2019](#) and Shared Commitment Two: Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention. Awareness and early intervention was one of the agreed areas of focus for the 2015 Council meetings.

Council welcomed the following guest presenters: Associate Professor James Scott, Consultant Psychiatrist, Department of Health; Ms Kelly Williams, Senior Community Development Officer, Lives Lived Well; and Dr Simone Caynes, Principal Policy Advisor, Queensland Mental Health Commission.

Associate Professor James Scott is an experienced child and adolescent psychiatrist. His research is broadly based on child and adolescent mental health and early psychosis. Associate Professor Scott provided a presentation on *'Reducing the Prevalence of Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders in Children and Youth'* and discussed with Council the necessity to change the public's view that preventing mental illness isn't a 'health problem' but a 'society problem'. Associate Professor Scott spoke of the risk factors and strategies for reducing the prevalence of mental disorders. The issue of parenting and bullying in schools was also discussed and the Council noted that Associate Professor Scott and his team have recently developed a bullying survey tool. The survey tool is currently being validated in pilot schools.

Ms Williams has worked in many areas of health promotion for over 15 years, focussing on health issues ranging from alcohol and drugs to mental health promotion and chronic disease. Her presentation on *'Alcohol- Related Harm Prevention'* included a focus on the identified risks of harm resulting from alcohol use.

Ms Williams flagged with Council that the Commonwealth Government is currently consulting on the draft National Drug Strategy 2016–2025. The public consultation is open until 27 October 2015 and the National Alcohol Strategy 2016–21 open for public comment until 6 November 2015.

The Commission has led the development of the Early Action: *Queensland Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Action Plan 2015–17* in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders. The Action Plan was publicly launched on 6 October 2015 during Mental Health Week 2015.

Dr Simone Caynes, staff member of the Commission provided members with a brief overview of the framework and priority areas within the Action Plan. Council noted that the Action Plan contains new and continuing actions by 16 Queensland Government agencies.

Council members agreed to assist the Mental Health Commission in its role to support and facilitate implementation of the Action Plan.

Other issues discussed

Members identified and discussed several other important issues:

1. The **Queensland Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2015–17** was launched on World Suicide Prevention Day, 10 September 2015 by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, The Hon Cameron Dick MP. The Suicide Prevention Action Plan is a priority area for action within the [Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019](#).
2. **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** implementation for people with a psychiatric condition continues to be an ongoing concern for Council members. Council were advised that the Commission convened a NDIS roundtable on 15 September 2015 with key stakeholders.

Stakeholders agreed that an ongoing strategic advisory mechanism was necessary to ensure people with mental health issues could achieve the best outcomes from changes to the service system as a result of NDIS implementation and participants agreed to continued ongoing involvement.

The Queensland Alliance for Mental Health agreed to take a leadership role in supporting the ongoing strategic advisory group. Council was represented at the initial Roundtable by Kingsley Bedwell. Kingsley has also been invited to participate in the ongoing advisory group as a representative of his own organisation.

3. **A shift in language from ‘consumer’ to ‘lived experience’** is being led by Dr Louise Byrne and a number of other stakeholders. Council discussed the implications and meaning of a language shift. Helen Glover shared that although she strongly identifies with, and her work is centrally informed by her lived experience of mental ill health, the label of ‘consumer’ does not represent her role and contribution. Council acknowledged that many people who have a lived experience do not see themselves as ‘consumers’ and those who support them don’t always see themselves as ‘carers’.

4. Council supported the Commission's approach of inviting a number of key stakeholders, including Dr Louise Byrne to discuss how the Commission as a whole can better engage and promote the value of lived experience in the co-design of the mental health and alcohol and other drug systems.
5. **The status of the Townsville Suicide Project** was discussed. The Commission engaged the services of Ms Barbara Schmidt and Torres Strait Islander Elder and community leader, Mr Philip Mills to scope the issues surrounding the development of a 24 hour culturally appropriate response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth suicide in Townsville. A report with recommendations has been provided to the Commission for consideration.
6. **Strategic Conversations with the Queensland Police Service** — the first in a series of meetings was held on 14 October 2015, with several more meetings planned. Council noted that the first meeting focussed on the interactions between police and people living with mental illness, or experiencing a mental health crisis.
7. **Mental Health Week 2015** was discussed by Council. The Council acknowledged the work of Open Minds including the award ceremony and introduction of new categories. Council applauded all of the Mental Health Achievement Award recipients, in particular the Youth Award Winner, Ms Maddie Dyer.
8. The **Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)** was also recognised by the Council for their outstanding work in highlighting mental health as a mainstream issue and for their regional coverage.
9. The **2016 Calendar of Events for Council** was discussed. Council agreed to visit to rural and regional communities in 2016 in addition to the scheduled meetings. It was agreed that small groups, comprising Council members and Commission staff, will meet with local people to discuss their priority for change.

Next meeting

The final Council meeting for the year is scheduled for 7 December 2015 and will focus on planning for 2016 Council priorities. This meeting will be followed by the annual morning tea to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by stakeholders to the work of the Commission.

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