

Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council

Meeting Communique

17 June 2016

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council met in Brisbane on Friday, 17 June 2016. This was the first meeting attended by the recently appointed Council Chair, Dr Peggy Brown, with ten new and four continuing members.

With changes in the Council membership, the meeting took the opportunity to reflect on the work of the Council over the last three years and to consider how best to contribute to better mental health and wellbeing for Queenslanders over the next three years.

Council was provided with an overview of the Commission's current work program and noted that during the next three years the Commission plans to focus on:

- A refreshed strategic plan for mental health and wellbeing in Queensland from early 2017
- Increasing understanding of rights protections mechanisms, particularly for people treated involuntarily
- Follow up on the implementation of commitments already made, which include 193 actions by 22 Government agencies as well as the work of the Commission itself
- Continuing support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through grassroots, community-owned programs and keeping the needs of other vulnerable groups on our agenda
- Continuing to highlight areas where more integrated delivery of government services will positively impact people living with mental illness and improve the overall wellbeing of Queenslanders, and
- Continuing to promote the importance of insights that come from lived experience.

Members look forward to engaging with the Commission on its major reform projects.

Review of the effectiveness of the Commission

Council expressed concern that since members met with the Public Sector Commission team on 18 May 2016 to provide their perspective on the effectiveness of the Commission, the Commissioner's role in the process has been changed to an advisory rather than an ex-officio member of the Commission Review Steering Committee.

Members were advised that the Steering Committee Chair has assured the Commissioner that she will have an opportunity to provide comment on the draft review report prior to it being forwarded to the Minister for Health by 30 June 2016. The Commissioner is invited to provide separate feedback on the report and its recommendations. The Council were disappointed to hear that it is unlikely they will receive the draft or final report.

Council acknowledged the commitment of the Commissioner and Commission staff for remaining focused on the mental health and wellbeing of Queenslanders during this stressful period when the Commission's effectiveness is being reviewed and the appointment of the Commissioner from 1 July 2016 is being finalised.

Issues identified for future meetings

Council noted that the policy to lock all mental health wards is still in place and resolved to seek information on the evaluation of the policy currently being undertaken by Queensland Health. The Commissioner was requested to seek a briefing by the Department of Health on this matter at the October meeting.

Council also raised concerns regarding the expiry of the National Partnership Agreement on 30 June 2016 which includes funding for the Housing and Support Program (HASP); and the need for continued support for people with mental health issues transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Members were particularly concerned about the uncertainty and impact of changes on consumers.

Council look forward to an opportunity to engage with the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council, once its membership is finalised, to identify areas to maximise respective capabilities.

The importance of the lived experience from the different perspectives of mental illness, suicide, and harm related to alcohol and other drugs was discussed and Council intends to develop an appropriate definition and recommend its use by the Commission.

Specific actions arising

Council requested that the Commissioner write to:

1. The Director-General Queensland Health, to seek advice on the implementation and risk management plan for continued support for people with mental health issues during the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Queensland.
2. The Chief Executive, Public Service Commission, to express the Council's concerns over the process for involvement of the Commissioner and the Council in the preparation of the report on the *Review of the Effectiveness of the Queensland Mental Health Commission*.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Council has been scheduled for 19 August 2016 in Brisbane. It will focus on:

- the governance requirements for members, and
- providing advice to the Commission on processes that might best support wide engagement in the review of the Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan in 2017.

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