

## Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council

### Meeting Communique

#### 7 December 2015

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The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council convened the last meeting for 2015 at South Brisbane on 7 December 2015. The meeting was followed by a morning tea event to meet and thank stakeholders for their support in reforming the mental health and alcohol and other drug systems. The stakeholder event was also attended by the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services.

Ms Michelle Edwards, an experienced Consumer and Carer Consultant from the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service attended the Council meeting to offer her perspective.

The primary focus of the meeting was to reflect on the Council's 2015 priority areas and identify areas for consideration in 2016. The Council agreed to refer the following three areas for the incoming Council's attention:

1. Rural and remote service provision
2. Issues for culturally and linguistically diverse Queenslanders
3. Integration of mental health and drug and alcohol services.

#### **Council member achievements**

Since the last Council meeting held on 19 October 2015, several members have been involved with a number of important projects including:

- Mr Luke Terry successfully securing \$1 million of Federal Government funding to invest in the Vanguard Laundry Services social enterprise located in Toowoomba. This investment ensures this initiative becomes a reality.
- Professor Gracelyn Smallwood's attendance at the first meeting of the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention project reference group hosted by the Queensland Mental Health Commission. The project will scope current service models, barriers for accessing services and options for improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people at risk of suicide within Townsville.

#### **Council membership**

This was the final meeting for several members whose terms expire in February 2016 and for the Council Chair, Professor Harvey Whiteford. Professor Whiteford has resigned from the Council, effective 29 January 2016, to take up an exciting opportunity with the United Nations.

Members of the Council and the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner acknowledged the Chair for his guidance, support and leadership since the Council's establishment. The Chair thanked the members for their support and in particular the Deputy Chair, Ms Jan Kealton for her

role as the Acting Chair, from time to time. Professor Whiteford shared his personal reflection that individuals should aim to leave the mental health, alcohol and other drugs system in better shape than they found it.

It is anticipated that the appointment of new Council Chair and members will be announced by the Minister for Health in early 2016.



*(L – R) Jan Kealton, Prof Brenda Happell, The Hon Cameron Dick MP, Prof Gracelyn Smallwood, Prof Harvey Whiteford, Etienne Roux, Kingsley Bedwell, Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck, Amelia Callaghan and Debbie Spink. Absent: Luke Terry and Mitchell Giles.*

### **Annual Council stakeholder morning tea**

Following the Council meeting, Council members attended the annual morning tea stakeholder event hosted by the Queensland Mental Health Commission and attended by the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services and over 70 stakeholders from across the community, government and non-government sectors.

The Minister noted the extensive work program of the Commission during 2015 and the importance of the contributions made by a wide range of stakeholders. He thanked those in attendance for their support and the actions taken to implement the shared commitments to action in the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019* as well as other initiatives to address mental health and wellbeing.



*Richmond Fellowship Community Choir*

The Minister officially launched the *Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Action Plan 2015–17* and acknowledged the input from a range of stakeholders to its development.

The Minister recognised the Council members for their contributions and formally acknowledged the outgoing Council Chair and Council members.

Guests were entertained by the popular Richmond Fellowship Community Choir, conducted by Ms Anne Birmingham.

### **Next meeting**

The first meeting for Council in 2016 will be announced after the new Council Chair has been appointed.

For any enquiries relating to this communique please contact the Council Secretariat by email at [Council@qmhc.qld.gov.au](mailto:Council@qmhc.qld.gov.au).