



Queensland  
**Mental Health and Drug  
Advisory Council**

## Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council regional visit Rockhampton - 5-6 December 2020

### COMMUNIQUE

---

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council (the Council) met in Rockhampton in December, accompanied by the Mental Health Commissioner, Executive Director, Communications and Engagement Director, Business Manager and Program Manager (Alcohol and Other Drugs), Queensland Mental Health Commission.

#### **Meeting highlights**

##### *Dr Louise Byrne - Queensland Lived Experience Workforce Framework presentation*

Dr Byrne, an RMIT researcher based at Yeppoon near Rockhampton, outlined the development and content of the [Queensland Framework for the Development of the Mental Health Lived Experience \(peer\) Workforce](#), launched in November last year.

She emphasised that the framework and associated documents are a toolkit for embedding people with lived experience of mental health challenges into public, private and NGO workplaces, and spoke about how it recognises lived experience as a valuable – indeed critical – ingredient in creating a healthy, robust and flexible workplace culture.

The Council acknowledged ways in which lived experience enhances workplace culture, including by reducing stigma, creating an environment for culturally safe disclosure, and enhancing mental health services.

Dr Byrne, who led the RMIT team that produced the *Queensland Framework for the Development of the Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce* suite of documents, was commended for her work and her commitment to embedding a lived experience workforce.

##### *Implementation update for the Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health. Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (Shifting minds)*

The Council was updated on the development of the *Shifting minds* Roadmap, and on feedback from the Strategic Leadership Group which facilitates engagement with senior leaders in the public service.

It was advised of consultation by the Nous group to develop a *Shifting minds* evaluation and monitoring framework. To date, consultation has involved stakeholders including lived experience and community groups.

The Council discussed progress in developing a renewed Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan, including feedback from strategic conversations and outcomes from key consultation group meetings. The Commission sought the Council's advice about the development of the plan in relation to the Commission's longer-term vision and approach.

##### *Productivity Commission Draft Report*

The Productivity Commission discussed its [Mental Health draft report](#) with Council on Wednesday 4 December.

Discussions at the Council meeting the following day included how the Commission's work relates to the draft report and its recommendations. In particular, Council members expressed concern about the intrusion of

compliance in the provision of mental health services, as opposed to relationship-building between clinicians/support workers and patients.

The Commission had made a submission when the Productivity Commission started work on its report. Council was advised the Commission was preparing a subsequent submission in response to the draft report, and that advice from the Council would inform that submission.

### **Rockhampton community events**

The Council hosted several events during its two days in Rockhampton, including an informal networking dinner with local mental health and alcohol and other drugs sector and regional PHN representatives, and an informal breakfast meeting attended by Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service executives and mental health staff.

Council members visited two local non-government organisations - Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc and the Gumbi Gumbi Drug and Alcohol Awareness Rehabilitation Centre.

#### Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc

Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc Chief Executive Officer Ms Nyoka Fetoa'i gave an overview of her organisation's services to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in the Rockhampton and greater Central Queensland area. Council members met staff and discussed Darumbal's programs and the challenges facing its community faces.

Darumbal Community Youth Services supports youth and families in Rockhampton by focussing on providing a safe Indigenous environment and staff trained to assist with personal support, life-skills development, sport and physical activity, cultural enhancement, education and training support, brief intervention, and introduction and referral to other support services. The service operates the Budaroo House Youth Shelter to provide supported transitional accommodation for youth between 16-21 who are at risk of homelessness.

Darumbal works to help Indigenous youth to be aware of and engage with Indigenous culture from an early age, helping to build strong social and community connections.

#### Gumbi Gumbi Drug and Alcohol Awareness Rehabilitation Centre

Gumbi Gumbi Chief Executive Mark Wharcom and several staff members provided an overview of the not-for-profit organisation's rehabilitation services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by problematic alcohol and other drugs use. Gumbi Gumbi offers alcohol and other drugs withdrawal and a residential rehabilitation service.

It works in a combination of residential and non-residential settings, merging cultural awareness and evidence-based treatment through group counselling and personal development. Twelve-week residential programs for men and women provide a holistic program that includes counselling, skills and education development, and practical advocacy and assistance.

Council members expressed their admiration for the suite of services provided to the community, particularly in light of limited resources and funding.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Council will be held in Brisbane on 14 February 2020.

Questions relating to this communique should be addressed to the Council Secretariat at [council@qmhc.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@qmhc.qld.gov.au).