



## Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council Meeting

### Robina Hospital, Gold Coast – 27 October 2023

## COMMUNIQUE

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The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council (the Council) met at Gold Coast Robina Hospital on 27 October 2023, followed by a visit to the Crisis Stabilisation Unit.

### Meeting highlights

#### *General update*

The Chair welcomed Michelle Sanders in her role as Director – Lived and Living Experience at the Commission.

Council members discussed the schedule for Advisory Council meetings through 2024 and the potential for the Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP to attend a future meeting. The Commission will send the schedule for Advisory Council meetings to the Minister to determine availability.

#### *Cultural Capability Plan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan*

Deb Pratt, Director System Reform, at the Commission provided an update on the cultural capability plan, stating that a draft of the plan has been completed and is on track to be approved by the Commission's Executive Leadership Team before the end of 2023.

Deb Pratt also provided a summary of the action taken regarding the consultation with the Department of Housing on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing plan. The Commission provided a submission to the *Our Place: First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-27* on 28 September 2023.

The Commissioner extended an invitation to Council members to attend a series of focus groups between 3 and 6 October in lieu of inviting a department representative to attend a future Advisory Council meeting.

#### *Mental Health Commission Act 2013*

The Council discussed the powers and functions of the Commission under the *Mental Health Commission Act 2013* (Qld). The Council agreed there is merit in making a recommendation to the Minister to consider a review of the *Mental Health Commission Act 2013* (Qld).

#### *The Voice Referendum*

The Council discussed the results of the Voice referendum and the need to support First Nations communities following the referendum. The Council recommended that the Commission release a public statement regarding the results of the referendum and the importance of the truth-telling process and Path to Treaty as a critical part of the healing process.

### *Drug overdose rate*

The Council discussed the drug overdose rate in Queensland and the availability of relevant data. It was noted that there was sufficient data to determine the viability of evidence-based approaches. The Council recommended that discussions on evidence-based responses (such as safe consumption rooms) be progressed and that a presentation be prepared for the Advisory Council meeting with the Minister in attendance.

There was also discussion regarding the challenges with Opioid Substitution Therapy prescribers and a request for an update from Queensland Health on their response.

### *ACT Decriminalisation of small quantities of illicit substances*

The Council discussed the decriminalisation of possessing small quantities of illicit substances in the Australian Capital Territory and the risk of new charges being rolled out that target people who were caught under the previous offences. The Council recommended that the Commission watch for similar unexpected consequences following the implementation of drug diversion in Queensland.

### *Middle East impact on Queensland communities*

The Council discussed the situation in the Middle East and its impact on Queensland's communities. Members raised concerns regarding the broader mental health impacts in Queensland's multicultural communities, particularly for people with backgrounds of trauma, and suggested that there was potential for the Commission to support these people in strengthening their connection to their communities and faith leaders. The Commission will consult with members of the multicultural community to determine the best approach for raising awareness and to support and empower Queenslanders impacted by the conflict.

### *Other*

Written updates were provided to the Council on:

- Human Rights
- First Nations
- Lived Experience
- Leading Reform Summit

### *Next meeting*

The next meeting is proposed for 12 December.