



Queensland
**Mental Health and Drug
Advisory Council**

Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council regional visit Sunshine Coast, Queensland (2-3 July 2019)

COMMUNIQUE

The Mental Health Commissioner, Mr Ivan Frkovic and the Commission's Executive Director, Dr Leanne Geppert accompanied the Council on their visit to the Sunshine Coast. The visit was supported by Council members, Ms Karlyn Chettleburgh and Ms Emma Kill, who provided the local lead.

During the visit, the Commissioner, Executive Director and the Council Deputy Chair, Ms Gabrielle Vilic attended a meeting with the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Chief Executive, Board Chair and invited Executive staff to discuss some of local emerging issues, innovations and achievements.

Sunshine Coast community events

Across the two-day visit, the Council hosted two forums – a dedicated consultation workshop focussed on Alcohol and Other Drugs and an informal networking breakfast meeting with representatives from the local mental health sector. The Council also had an opportunity to visit two local non-government organisations.

Community Stakeholder Alcohol and Other Drugs Workshop

The workshop discussions, facilitated by the Commission in partnership with Dovetail Director, Mr Jeff Buckley, provided an opportunity for key government, non-government and community networks and representatives to discuss emerging whole-of-government reform directions and priorities in relation to improving alcohol and other drugs, and reducing the impact of, problematic alcohol and other drugs (AOD); and discuss the important work already underway in the Sunshine Coast region.

The outcomes from the workshop discussion will be used to assist the Commission in identifying how the work already underway in the Sunshine Coast and the surrounding region connects and aligns with the emerging reform agenda and the whole of government Strategic Plan – [*Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023*](#).

Breakfast meeting with the mental health sector

With the support of Dr Jody Tunnicliffe the Council hosted an informal breakfast meeting with representatives from the Sunshine Coast mental health sector. This event provided an opportunity for local key stakeholder guests from government, non-government and community organisations and networks to share views for achieving better mental health and wellbeing outcomes with the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner, Mr Ivan Frkovic, and the members of the Council.



Pic: Ms Karen Philips, General Manager, United Synergies StandBy; Ms Kerrie Keepa, Council member; Ms Sue Scheinpflug, Council member; Dr Leanne Geppert, QMHC Executive Director

Council site visits to local non-government organisations

The Queensland Injectors Health Network and Lives Lived Well hosted the Council visits to their respective services. The Council found the two visits very informative and made the following observations:

Queensland Injectors Health Network (QuIHN)

The Council met [QuIHN's](#) Chief Executive Officer, Mr Geoff Davey and several members of his multidisciplinary team. During the site visit the following matters were discussed:

- some of the complex client pathway examples
- how QuIHN's staff manage the impact of vicarious trauma
- the call for additional investment for the peer workforce
- how the funding cycles; and differing reporting and data collection requirements impact services.

Lives Lived Well

The visit to [Lives Lived Well](#) provided an opportunity for the Council to meet with Ms Leah Tickner, Manager Operations and Performance and her dedicated team who provide valuable alcohol and drug counselling services and support to young people. Some of the highlights from their discussions include:

- The importance of having a flexible and wrap around approach; sharing how the team at Lives Lived Well work closely with each other, work alongside their clients, and how they rely on sharing and cooperating with other service providers.
- The challenges associated with Sunshine Coast's geography of the and the impact of the current public transport system for accessing services.
- How the Lives Lived Well team have adopted an outreach approach, meeting clients in locations that work for them.
- Funding was also discussed and like QuIHN they discussed how the current funding model impacts their services.

Observations from the Sunshine Coast visit

The Council thanks the Sunshine Coast region's mental health and alcohol and other drugs sector representatives for their generous hospitality and openness with sharing of information. They acknowledged the region's great sense of collaboration and partnership.

The Council also acknowledges the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service and the Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast Primary Health Network for their leadership and support at the various community stakeholder events.

During their discussion with the Sunshine Coast community, the Council heard about some of the challenges currently facing their local alcohol and other drug system, that include:

- qualification requirements for the AOD clinical and peer workforce
- how locals are seeking treatment outside of the Sunshine Coast due to the availability of the current non-government and community medical drug and alcohol detoxification services and residential rehabilitation services
- how the current waiting times for withdrawal management are directly impacting recovery outcomes
- how access to services for people living outside of the Sunshine Coast are being impacted due to the geographic spread and the current public transport services
- how late funding advice and funding allocation cycles impact the non-government agencies to effectively recruit and retain experienced workforce.

The local stakeholders made several recommendations that included investment consideration for the following priority areas:

Alcohol and other drugs

- support for local public and non-government medical detoxication services
- support services for people awaiting detoxication withdrawal support services
- additional resourcing for local hubs and outreach services
- better transportation between the Sunshine Coast and surrounding locations such as Gympie.

Mental health services

- Issue for clients not eligible to receive a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package being diverted to the public and private sector.
- Impact of NDIS on the workforce with regards to attracting and retaining qualified staff and impact on minimum standards.

The Council acknowledge a number of existing services, resources, and local investments already committed in addressing some of these challenges; including the broad range of free clinical services offered at the [USC Thompson Institute](#) for the local community.

The Commissioner advised the Council that feedback provided during the consultations will be considered when developing a whole of government renewed alcohol and other drug plan.

Council meeting discussions

Implementation update for the Shifting Minds: Queensland Mental Health. Alcohol and Other Drug Strategic Plan 2018-2023

The Council was advised of the work currently underway with the Department of Health and other agencies to enhance options for crisis and suicide related care and support, including the Emergency Departments.

The Council also noted the work being undertaken by the Commission to finalise the Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan.

Advice provided by the Council included the recommendations for the Suicide Prevention Plan to emphasise the importance of the role of people with lived experience; acknowledge the protective benefits of culture in suicide prevention and the role of creating resilient communities; and to ensure that workplaces are considered a key setting for suicide prevention.

The Council was also provided with an update on the Commission's role in leading the development of a renewed whole-of-government, cross-sectoral approach to prevent and reduce the adverse impact of alcohol and other drugs on the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

The Council was interested to hear that the development of the renewed Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan for Queenslanders will be overseen by a strategic working group; and that the priority areas for the plan will include system wide integration, drug policy reform and prevention and early intervention measures.

Stretch2Engage Framework

The Council was advised that the Commission is currently piloting and evaluating the efficacy of the Stretch2Engage Framework in several sites spanning mental health and alcohol and other drug services in public, private and non-government settings.

The Commission has engaged the Stretch2Engage partnership – Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH), Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (QNADA) and Enlightened Consultants to oversee the pilot project.

The Council was advised that the findings of the project, including a suite of tested engagement tools, will be shared publicly and through the Commission's stakeholders.

National Mental Health Commission – Connections project

The Council was advised that the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) has recently launched a national conversation on the 2030 Vision for mental health and suicide prevention, known as the [Connections project](#).

The NMHC will be visiting 23 cities and towns to connect with the community on their individual experiences of the mental health system and will be visiting the following communities in Queensland:

- Thursday Island – Wednesday, 3 July 2019
- Townsville – Monday, 12 August 2019
- Mt Isa – Wednesday, 14 August 2019
- Brisbane – Monday, 29 July 2019
- Gold Coast – Tuesday, 30 July 2019

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Council is planned to be held during the Council's visit to the West Moreton region on 26 September 2019.

If you have any enquiries relating to the communique, please contact the Council Secretariat via email at: council@qmhc.qld.gov.au.

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