



Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council

Meeting Communiqué

21 April 2017

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council convened its second meeting for 2017 in Brisbane on Friday, 21 April 2017.

The meeting agenda was focused primarily on the recent *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019* renewal community consultations; and the implementation of the *Connecting care to recovery 2016–2021: A plan for Queensland’s State-funded mental health, alcohol and other drugs services*.

Ms Sandra Eyre, Senior Director, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch, Department of Queensland Health was invited as a guest presenter.

In the absence of an appointed Council Chair and Deputy Chair, Professor David Kavanagh was nominated to chair the meeting.

Connecting care to recovery

Ms Sandra Eyre briefed the Council on the implementation of *Connecting care to recovery 2016–2021: A plan for Queensland’s State-funded mental health, alcohol and other drugs services*.

The Council acknowledged that the *Connecting care to recovery 2016–2021* plan was a major commitment under the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019*.

The presentation included an overview of the \$358 million investment initiatives. The delivery of the initiatives will occur through Hospital and Health Services (HHS) and other state funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services including non-government and community managed organisations. Further initiatives are being managed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Branch and the Mental Health and Other Drugs Branch in Queensland Health, and by Mater Health Services.

The Council noted that a measurement and reporting framework tool is currently being developed to enable regular monitoring of the implementation of the plan, and performance of services and outcomes associated with receiving State-funded mental health and/or alcohol and other drug treatment, care and support.

The Council was pleased to note that the Lavender Parent and Infant Mental Health Unit at the Gold Coast University Hospital officially opened in March 2017 for new mothers with disorders such as severe postnatal depression, anxiety or psychotic illness. It was acknowledged that this issue was raised by the Commission and the Council in 2014–15 and some key stakeholders have attributed that work as a significant factor in funding for this initiative.

The Council applauded the investment initiatives but voiced its concern that the plan focuses only on supporting services for people who are living with severe mental illness or substance use disorders.

Other issues discussed

1. **Update on the renewal of the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014-2019*** — The Council noted that the Commission has commenced the consultation process to renew the Strategic Plan and update of the Action Plans. The next Council meeting, scheduled for 16 June 2017, will include a facilitated discussion about the plan. It is expected that the community consultations will be finalised in June 2017.
2. **Update on the review of the *Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013*** — The review of the *Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013* was discussed. The Council noted that the steering group, managed by the Department of Queensland Health has not yet been provided with an analysis of the survey.
3. **Update on the status for the appointments of Council Chair, Deputy Chair and additional members** — The Council noted that the Department of Queensland Health is progressing appointments of additional members. Appointments to the Chair and Deputy Chair roles are pending further consideration.
4. **Report from the Mental Health Commission Leaders forum** — The Council noted that the Mental Health Commission leaders confirmed their commitment to fostering Indigenous leadership by supporting national collaboration. The first meeting of senior policy staff has been held.
5. **Update on the Wolston Park survivors reconciliation process** — The Council noted that the formal reconciliation process has commenced. The Council welcomed the news that community advocate Ms Betty Taylor has been appointed as the independent mediator, and that a planned event to commemorate those who fought for the 2010 apology has been scheduled for June 2017.

Emerging risks to Queensland Reforms

The Council members identified further important issues for consideration:

- **Focus of the Fifth Mental Health Plan** — The Council voiced its concern that the focus of the plan was limited to the management of severe mental illness, and questioned how the priorities of previous plans would be maintained, including their emphases on mental health wellbeing and prevention.
- **Council focus on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)** — The Council acknowledged that while this is often seen as an issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, it is also a matter of concern for the wider community. The Council strongly agreed that this was an important issue and that the next few Council meetings will include a focus on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
- **Multicultural input to discussions about mental health and national security** — The Council was represented at the Mental Health, Extremism and Lone-Actor Grievance-Fuelled Violence Symposium held in Brisbane. The Council noted the linkages to national security; terrorism related concerns; and involvement with mental health services in Queensland, and voiced concern that it appeared that no engagement had been made with the ethnic community sectors. The Council agreed with the importance of engaging with relevant stakeholders across Queensland in a way that maintains social cohesion whilst also contributing to balanced consideration to the wellbeing of all communities.

- **Support for mothers and family members with alcohol and other drugs use issues** — The Council discussed the issues for mothers with alcohol and other drugs use issues, and the barriers for seeking support and disclosure. Expectant new mothers and families who use illicit drugs may not be reporting their use, or avoiding contact with health services because of their concern of that their children may be removed from their care. The Council further noted the lack of appropriate perinatal and associated family health services for those whose use illicit drugs, the real or perceived stigmatisation can also potentially impact access to care.
- **Identity loss and bereavement for people diagnosed with a mental illness** — The Council discussed the issue of identity loss and bereavement that can result from the trauma of being diagnosed with mental illness, and the exacerbation of the person's mental illness as a result of internal and external stigmatisation.
- **Youth self-harm** — The Council discussed the rates of self-harm among young people, and the need for effective treatment and support for carers.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be on Friday, 16 June 2017. The meeting agenda will include a dedicated formal facilitated consultation on the Strategic Plan renewal and further discussion about the contribution Council can make to increasing understanding of FASD.

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

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