



Queensland  
**Mental Health and Drug  
Advisory Council**

## **Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council meeting communiqué Brisbane, Queensland, 4 December 2020**

*The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council's final meeting for 2020 discussed plans for a systematic analysis of Queensland's non-government organisation (NGO) community mental health services sector. The Queensland Mental Health Commission will lead the needs analysis project in 2021.*

### ***Mental health community support services sector (NGO) growth***

The Commission's Policy and Program Delivery Program Manager, Ms Deb Pratt said the project would be delivered through a partnership approach with the Commission, the Queensland Department of Health, and the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health.

Council members agreed the NGO sector should be recognised as equal to the private and public mental health sectors.

They welcomed the intent to examine the sector from a person-centred perspective noting that people in need of support should not be excluded because service capacity.

People should be supported close to home, rather than at a location determined by funding sources, and homeless people with complex comorbidity issues should be considered as part of the system.

The Council recommended the project consider the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) model of care, which readily deliver holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate health care while integrating multiple funding sources.

Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez was nominated to represent the Council on the reference group.

### **Other meeting discussions**

#### ***Housing Report – Council member Ms Karyn Walsh***

Ms Walsh advised several homeless services had reduced their capacity at a time when a lack of housing options continued to be a serious issue for Queensland's vulnerable populations).

She said it was important to ensure joint planning and consideration of different housing models (beyond studio apartments) to support people unable to sustain tenancies.

The Council agreed there should be more consideration of the effects of emerging accommodation providers, such as hostels, versus homelessness services.

#### ***Multicultural community mental health and wellbeing– Council member Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez***

Dr Correa-Velez noted the wellbeing of refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities during the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery phases was affected by:

- immigration policies
- a lack of supports for students
- domestic violence, and
- stigma.

He said the Multicultural Mental Health Working Group was focused on addressing the mental health needs of these groups, including the issue of support for carers.

Council members noted how language barriers could undermine service and better health outcomes for migrants and refugees, with language proficiency particularly important in psychiatric, given the importance of verbal communication for making psychiatric diagnoses.

Dr Correa-Velez highlighted Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) did not provide free interpreter services, and the Commonwealth Government's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)) covered general practitioner consultations but was not available for psychology sessions.

Commissioner Mr Ivan Frkovic agreed to raise the issue at the next nationwide Joint Mental Health Commissioners meeting.

#### ***Restrictive practices and minors – Council member Ms Naraja Clay***

Ms Clay asked if the Commission was aware of any reports detailing authorised mental health service use of seclusion, mechanical restraint, and/or physical restraint of people under the age of 18.

The Council noted that the [Mental Health Act 2016](#) required services to notify the Public Guardian if minors were subject to such restrictive practices.

Mr Frkovic said he would seek information on the issue for the next Council meeting.

#### ***Workers' Compensation amendments – Council member Mr Jorgen Gullestrup***

Mr Gullestrup reported the Queensland [Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019](#) provides enhanced support for workers with psychological injuries, assisting them in the process of making workers' compensation claims.

He said the definition of a psychological injury had changed under the Act, and work must now be 'a significant' contributing factor, where previously it was 'the major' contributing factor.

Mr Gullestrup said claims could now be accepted outside the six-month lodgement timeframe at the insurer's discretion and that Workcover Queensland could fund programs to help employers achieve optimal workplace health and safety.

#### **Next meeting**

The next meeting, planned for 26 February 2021, will focus on alcohol and other drugs.

Inquiries about this communiqué can be made to the Council Secretariat via [council@gmhc.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@gmhc.qld.gov.au).