

1 November 2019

Queensland Mental Health Commission welcomes reform report

The Queensland Mental Health Commission has welcomed the National Productivity Commission's draft report on mental health released this week.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Mr Ivan Frkovic said the draft report called for major reforms to close service gaps and better target services to meet needs.

"It acknowledges the importance of non-health services and organisations in preventing mental illness and supporting recovery, highlighted the importance of an increased focus on early intervention and prevention, and stresses the need to combat stigma," Mr Frkovic said.

"Importantly, the draft report recognises the importance of responses to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"The Productivity Commission's analysis of mental health across Australia provides an impressive tranche of evidence to support efforts for reform," Mr Frkovic said.

"This will help inform considerations of how we can improve mental health care service provision and funding approaches to get the best outcomes for people experiencing mental illness, those affected by suicide, and their families and other supporters.

"I'm pleased to note that many of the draft report's findings and recommendations align with the [Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023](#) and [Every life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2029](#), particularly around early intervention and prevention," he said.

"It's clear that the Productivity Commission sees Queensland as an exemplar for reform in some facets of the mental health system."

Mr Frkovic said this year's Queensland Budget allocation of \$80.1 million over four years toward suicide prevention initiatives and activities was evidence that the state took its mental health obligations seriously.

"That funding was preceded by a \$106 million Queensland Government allocation in 2018-19, to support the expansion of public community mental health services."

The Productivity Commission draft report notes that mental health and mental illness are not purely the domain of the health system, with areas such as employment, workplaces, education, housing, the justice system and the broader community all having a role to play.



“Mental ill-health and suicide have an impact on every Queenslanders and every community, and I’m buoyed by the Productivity Commission’s recognition that this demands a response that reaches every level and sector.

“The QMHC is underpinned by an understanding that mental health and suicide prevention present an enormous and incredibly important challenge that requires innovative approaches to ensure we get the best outcomes at every level.

“Mental health and suicide prevention are everybody’s business, and every part of the community has a role to play in reform.”

Mr Frkovic said the QMHC would take time to analyse the Productivity Commission’s comprehensive draft report before formulating a submission to inform the final document.

The Productivity Commission will hold hearings in Rockhampton on 2 December and Brisbane on 3 December. Registration details are here:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health/public-hearings>.

The draft report and summary documents can be seen here <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health/draft>, along with information on making submissions or comments (due by 23 January 2020).

ENDS

Media: Carolyn Varley, 0477 385 121 or Kate Southwell, 07 3244 9240.