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Rockhampton woman appointed new national mental health representative

A mental health consumer consultant from Rockhampton has been appointed to the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) to advocate for, and influence national mental health policy and reform.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic today announced Tanya Kretschmann would be one of two Queensland representatives on the forum. The second Queensland representative is Cheryl Rudorfer from Bundaberg.

Mr Frkovic said the positions were vitally important as there was so much change happening in the mental health sector with the ongoing rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and new initiatives around safety and quality of mental health care.

Queensland's representatives will contribute to informing a number of national bodies, including government committees and advisory groups, professional bodies and other consultative forums.

"As national forum members, Tanya and Cheryl will be the voice of Queensland consumers and carers, bringing real life examples, issues and concerns to the ears of policy and decision makers," Mr Frkovic said.

"Both have a good understanding of the systemic shifts underway and clearly demonstrate the critical analysis, communication skills and passion to make a difference.

"They are both already strong advocates for Queenslanders with a lived experience of mental illness, and will take this opportunity to push for positive change."

Ms Kretschmann is currently a Mental Health Consumer Consultant for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, with a strong interest in youth, adolescent and adult mental health. She holds a range of representative positions including with the Consumer and Carer Committee of the Australian and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders and the Queensland Eating Disorder Advisory Group.

Ms Kretschmann said: "It is important for people with lived experience to have a seat at the table to shape reform to mental health services, programs, legislation and strategy.

"I'd like to see greater focus on early intervention and prevention, especially for young people, and recovery-oriented care," she said.

Mr Frkovic expressed appreciation to Queensland's retiring NMHCCF members, Noel Muller and Peter Dillon, for their lengthy service to Queensland's mental health consumers and carers.

Ms Kretschmann and Ms Rudorfer will attend their first NMHCCF meeting in March 2018.

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