



Queensland
**Mental Health and Drug
Advisory Council**

Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council Meeting BRISBANE – 1 May 2020 (special meeting in response to COVID -19)

COMMUNIQUE

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council (the Council) met via videoconference on 1 May 2020. The Mental Health Commissioner and the Executive Director, Queensland Mental Health Commission (the Commission) were in attendance.

Meeting highlights

COVID-19 Extraordinary Meeting

A special meeting was convened in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the agenda discussions were specifically focussed on the pandemic and the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

An update was provided on the Commission's initial response to the pandemic including a high-level overview of Joint Commissioners' COVID-19 information-sharing meetings, and key meetings with representatives from local and regional mental health and AOD government and non-government sectors.

The Council shared their anecdotal advice on how the pandemic has affected their community and vulnerable groups (based on their personal and professional roles). Examples of how the pandemic has had a negative impact across refugee communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, community-based alcohol and other drugs services, and the homelessness and housing sector were discussed. The impacts of increased surveillance on people were discussed including potential for increasing experiences of stigma and discrimination.

The potential for increased burden for frontline services providing support to vulnerable community members was noted.

The Council noted the Queensland Government recent announcement of a \$28 million COVID-19 grant fund (managed through Queensland Health) to support the non-government sector in providing services to those affected by mental health, problematic alcohol and other drugs issues. The funding will be used to boost the capacity of the sectors and help to address the loss of the volunteer workforce in the mental health, alcohol and other drug sector.

The Commissioner provided the members with a high-level overview on the development of the [National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan](#) and the development of a Queensland mental health recovery plan. The Council members were encouraged to provide any recommendations to support the development out of session.

Lived Experience Peak

A brief update on the new mental health consumer peak was provided and members were invited to share their views regarding the Project Steering Committee nominations.

Community Event

Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the Council did not meet in person and did not attend any community events.

Next meeting

The next Council meeting will be scheduled for early July via videoconference to comply with COVID-19 restrictions and advice.

Questions relating to this communique should be addressed to the Council Secretariat by email to council@gmhc.qld.gov.au.