

Media statement

14 April 2014

First Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council meeting in Queensland

Agreeing on the issues currently impacting people living with and recovering from mental health and substance use difficulties, their families and carers was the first order of business for the inaugural Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council meeting held today in Brisbane.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner, Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck said the first meeting was a fantastic start for the advisory council.

“We couldn’t have asked for a better inaugural meeting; the tone was upbeat and everyone was really enthusiastic about where we’re heading,” Dr van Schoubroeck said.

“We agreed on a shared vision that reflects what the Commission has heard over the last nine months.

“But it wasn’t just a talk-fest. The group is really interested in seeing practical solutions that will make a difference to people in their own communities.

“Our council members come from such varied backgrounds that they should complement each other nicely when looking at both the long term and the immediate issues,” she said.

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council’s Chairman is Professor Harvey Whiteford, who will be supported by Deputy Chair Jan Kealton and Council members Ailsa Rayner, Amelia Callaghan, Ben Tune, Brenda Happell, Christian Rowan, Debra Spink, Etienne Roux, Gracelyn Smallwood, Kingsley Bedwell, Luke Terry and Mitchell Giles.

The Council covered a range of issues at their first meeting, including:

1. A whole-of-government strategic plan
2. Establishment of committees of the Council
3. Social housing for people with mental health and/or substance use problems
4. Securing of adult acute public mental health facilities
5. Rural and remote mental health
6. Collaborative mechanisms being established with key stakeholders

The group will meet again in mid-May.

For more information on the Queensland Mental Health Commission visit www.qmhc.qld.gov.au

ENDS Media contact: Leanne Brearley 0410 673 322

Please see background information on the next page for information about the Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council members.

Media statement

Background

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council will be champions for all consumers, family members and carers. Their appointments were selected from more than 150 applicants based on their skills, knowledge or experience of mental health and substance misuse issues.

Chair Professor Harvey Whiteford's career spans more than three decades and his significant influence extends from clinical practice and administration to research and public policy.

Deputy Chair Jan Kealton is a respected national campaigner for a better understanding of mental illness and member of Queensland Voice and Queensland Alliance.

Ailsa Rayner has a background in human services and is currently based in Cairns as a consumer consultant for Queensland Health.

Amelia Callaghan is a youth advocate based in Palm Beach as the State Manager Queensland and the Northern Territory for Headspace.

Ben Tune is perhaps best known as an Australian rugby union player. He is now a public speaker on mental health.

Brenda Happell is a respected researcher and Director of the Institute for Health and Social Science at Central Queensland University with a strong focus on consumer engagement.

Christian Rowan is an addiction medicine specialist and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Uniting Care Health and Director of Medical Services St Andrews War Memorial Hospital.

Debra Spink is the co-founder and Managing Director of Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness and focuses on fundraising to develop education and support programs.

Etienne Roux has a special interest in social inclusion and engaging young people in a multicultural setting. He is the Executive Manager Social Inclusion and Support Services with Access Community Service.

Gracelyn Smallwood is a prominent Aboriginal leader, tireless advocate for improved outcomes for Indigenous health and Adjunct Professor at James Cook University.

Kingsley Bedwell is Chief Executive of Richmond Fellowship Queensland which empowers people to develop their own personal recovery plans.

Luke Terry is Executive Director of Toowoomba Clubhouse helping people with mental illness gain the skills and confidence to return to the workforce.

Mitchell Giles is Chief Executive Officer of Lives Lived Well and has extensive experience managing hospital-based drug and alcohol services.