

Media statement

27 May 2014

Department of Health reinvests \$22 million in mental health funding

Queensland's Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck has congratulated the Department of Health on the recent reallocation of mental health funding to community managed organisations across the state.

The Commissioner said negotiations about a Request for Offer (RFO) in Queensland have been underway for some months.

"These announcements reflect a more inclusive and simplified approach following industry concerns about an earlier proposed process that did not take account of the realities of operating a community managed organisation," Dr van Schoubroeck said.

"I'm confident that this recent announcement shows that taxpayer funds will be transparently allocated in a way that gets best value for money to meet the needs of people in their local communities.

"The Department and the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have both made huge efforts over recent months to get us to this point.

"The use of independent people from the community sector in the evaluation process has added credibility to the outcomes and this is to be applauded.

"There is such a huge need for mental health, alcohol and drug related services to be delivered in the community and as close to people's homes as possible.

"I understand that those organisations that missed out on funding this year will be upset, but we must make sure our processes provide funding to those organisations who are best able to deliver services to people who need them, where they need them," she said.

The Commissioner acknowledged that the timelines were still quite tight, but not impossible.

“Over the life of these contracts we hope to see more scope to respond flexibly to emerging needs.

“I am concerned, however, that there may have been a shift of funds away from programs focused on promotion, prevention and early intervention and I have recently written to the Department Health about the extent to which this has happened.

“While I appreciate that the State should not be providing funds to programs that are a Commonwealth responsibility, locally based programs that strengthen the capacity of communities either directly or through programs in schools, for instance, need to be supported if we are to improve mental health and wellbeing,” Dr van Schoubroeck said

ENDS

Media contact: Leanne Brearley 0410 673 322