

QUEENSLAND MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONER

SPEAKING NOTES

9 October 2014

Launch of the Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014-2019

Introduction

- Acknowledge the Honourable Lawrence Springborg MP, including his support for the Commission to undertake an independent role.
- Other Members of Parliament and guests, and members of the Advisory Council who could be here today.
- Thank you to the Board of MIFQ and the CEO Tony Stevenson for hosting this event for us today.
- I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land where we are meeting today, and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present. I acknowledge the other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people among us here today.
- I also acknowledge the people living with mental illness and drug and alcohol use problems, their families and carers. We must remember that a helping hand, a listening ear or a kind word could make such a difference to their lives, in a society where they too often feel excluded.
- I'm delighted to be here this morning with a much promised strategic plan – Improving mental health and wellbeing: Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014-2109.

About the plan

- This is a plan for all Queenslanders, because in one way or another we are all affected — individually and as a community — by problems with mental health and substance misuse.
- This is a plan that aims to change the way in which people with mental illness and substance abuse problems are treated – treated by the community, by industry, by government, by clinicians, by the media – and by themselves.
- So we all have a role and we will all benefit

Our vision

We are working towards a healthy and inclusive community where people experiencing mental health difficulties or issues related to substance use have a life with purpose ... and access to quality care and support ... focused on wellness and recovery, in an understanding, empathic and compassionate society.

Outcomes: What we want to see in 5 years' time is:

- Better mental health and wellbeing across Queensland
- Reduced stigma and discrimination for people with problems with mental health and substance use
- Reduced avoidable harm, fewer people attempting suicide, fewer people suffering from the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol
- For those people with mental health and substance use problems:
 - we want them to have lives with purpose, that is meaningful community involvement, work, volunteering, furthering their education and training.
 - We want them to have better physical and oral health. It is unacceptable that people with mental illness are dying 15-20 years earlier than the general population. It is unacceptable that they are more likely to have diabetes, obesity, heart disease and some cancers.
- And we want those people and their families who are in treatment to have a positive experience of that treatment. We want that treatment and support to be centred around the wishes of the individual and their family. We want it to be responsive to their culture and circumstances. We want it to be accessible, delivered by skilled and compassionate staff. We want to reduce boredom in hospitals.

What action will we take to get there?

- If you are looking for a detailed road map and a long list of actions, you may be disappointed.
- In five years' time, we do not want a list of great initiatives, most of them not implemented.
- There are eight shared commitments to action intended to encourage and enable the kinds of collaborative and innovative work that is needed on a number of fronts to achieve sustainable improvements in all our six outcome areas — both overall, and for vulnerable population groups.
- The shared commitments to action are about continuous improvement. They provide the opportunity for innovation. For new voices to be part of decision making.
- There is already a lot happening.
- These commitments aim to build on that and I encourage people from all walks of life to work together so that we get better results from our efforts.
- Take for example Shared Commitment 1:

- **Action 1:**
- We want individuals with mental health and substance use problems, their families and carers to have more say at all levels in how the system is designed and services are delivered.
- Many public health services and non-government organisations are doing a great job providing avenues for consumers and carers in system improvement. Through our Advisory Council, we are getting more work underway.
- This might sound simple, but it is about a shift in power, a shift in which voices are included in decision making, in staff selection and staff training, as well as in service design and delivery.
- This is a shift in who decides what is best for individuals and communities.
- A shift in power is not easy.
- **Action 2:**
- We must improve awareness, prevention and early intervention.
- Awareness, prevention and early intervention means that we must continue to talk about mental health, to reduce stigma and discrimination so that people will seek help earlier. This is not only government's role. The media has a key role to play.
- Awareness, prevention and early intervention means people need to know where their nearest services are.
- Awareness, prevention and early intervention means we must invest in services for children and young people.
- Awareness, prevention and early intervention means we need mentally healthy schools and workplaces.
 - Business and industry are already working in this space. Our Chamber of Commerce and Industry has a clear focus on the mental health and wellbeing of the many owners of small to medium enterprises across Queensland.
 - Larger industry groups — from construction to mining to legal firms — are increasingly investing in the mental health and wellbeing of their workforces, not just because they know that it makes good economic sense but because they believe it is the right thing to do.
 - In our public sector, many CEOs have a clear focus on improving mental health and wellbeing in their workplaces. Thank you to those who have shown their support by being here today.
- **Action 3:**
- There are some priority action areas that need a very specific focus and where some work has begun:
 - Rural and remote communities. Through the Minister's Roundtables on Rural and Remote Mental Health good ideas are steadily turning into reality.
 - The social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is our intention to work more closely with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) in the coming year.

- Suicide prevention – approximately 650 Queenslanders die by suicide each year, but 15,000 people attempt suicide. Our focus must be on reducing attempted suicides.
- Reducing the adverse impacts of drugs and alcohol –we have started work here with Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (QNADA). The focus will be on demand reduction and harm minimisation. Members of the Advisory Council are helping lead the way.
- **Action 4:**
- A responsive and sustainable community sector – our immediate priority here is to examine options for better social outcomes in the procurement processes. Some Queensland businesses are already purchasing some of their goods and services from social enterprises. So I am very pleased that the Department of Housing and Public Works has committed to more actively supporting the achievement of social benefits and objectives through the Queensland Government’s Procurement Policy. Once again, the Advisory Council is sponsoring effort in this area.
- And we have recently started work with Volunteering Queensland to develop to see what might be done to increase the use of volunteering in mental health.
- **Action 5:**
- Encourages all government agencies to consider the needs of people with mental health problems.
 - We are currently working the Housing and Public Works to examine the impact of Anti-Social Behaviour (3 strikes) policies on this group.
 - A long standing arrangement with Education and Health connects educators and school counsellors to child and youth mental health services.
 - The Queensland Police Service provides training to cadets and police officers to ensure they respond to the mental health needs of the people with whom they come into contact. I know that the Commissioner for Police is a strong advocate for a mentally health workforce.
 - Working together I am sure we can do more.
- **Action 6**
- Many attribute the poor physical and oral health of people with mental health and substance misuse problems to the lack of integration of services. Mental health, drug and alcohol policy, planning and service delivery should only be separate from general health when it is in the best interests of the people receiving services.
- In the coming year, the Department of Health and the Commission will undertake a more detailed study of systemic barriers between general health and mental health, drug and alcohol services.
- **Action 7:**
- Queensland Health has committed to a new detailed plan for mental health and drug and alcohol services, with development commencing early 2015.

- A plan is not just about where services need to be but the resources, standards and staffing that is needed to deliver those services.
- **Action 8:**
- We do need to set targets and benchmarks. It is ok to say we want to improve but we need measures to show what progress we're making. The task of developing a set of meaningful indicators has begun shortly and will complement the work on indicators of progress against The Queensland Plan.

Grants to facilitate community wellbeing

- Finally, I come to an initiative that I've been looking forward to announcing today — one that will support implementation of the Plan at the local community level across the state.
- The Stronger Community Wellbeing Grants program will support communities to deliver on our shared commitment to actions that promote awareness about, and reduce the incidence, severity and impact of mental illness and substance use disorders.
- The Stronger Community Wellbeing Grants program will offer:
 - grants of up to \$50,000 for community wellbeing enhancement initiatives
 - grants of up to \$15,000 to support training delivered in local communities, and
 - smaller grants to support community members to attend training in Brisbane on capacity building for community wellbeing.
- Applications for these grants will open on 17 October, so watch out for more information, which will be available shortly on the Queensland Mental Health Commission's website.
- Also on the website, of course, you will be able to download additional copies of both the full Strategic Plan and the poster version, and keep up to date with the progress and outcomes of our collective efforts across Queensland to implement it over the next five years.
- THANK YOU, ENDS