

What you told us – summary of online survey responses

Developing a strategic plan

A key role for the Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC) is to develop a whole-of-government strategic plan to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and minimise the impact of substance misuse in our communities.

To inform development of the plan the QMHC undertook in-person consultation forums and posted an online survey.

About the survey

The survey was designed to reach the widest possible section of the community as part of our consultation process. It can be [accessed](#) via the QMHC website and has been promoted via our consultation forums and [online newsletters](#).

This document provides a summary of a total of 87 responses that were received from stakeholders including consumers, carers, clinical staff and community and non-government stakeholders over a period from October to November 2013. The survey remains open and responses are receiving ongoing review.

The survey included both scale-based and open-ended written response items designed garner perspectives on improving the mental health of the community.

The responses exhibited a high degree of consensus with those heard through our other consultation forums.

Major themes

As expected from the broad cross-section of stakeholders responding to the survey, there were a wide range of comments and suggestions relating to multiple aspects of community mental health across the state.

The categories of responses occurring most frequently were as follows:

- 64% of responses contained themes relating to improving the implementation and delivery of services
- 31% of responses contained themes relating to fostering greater community and interagency engagement with those services
- 18% contained themes relating to improving the awareness and promotion of mental health issues in the community.

Provided below is a summary of the most prominent issues raised as well as representative remarks quoted directly from the written responses.

Improving services

Responses included suggestions and recommendations to improve services in the following areas:

- accessibility to individuals across the community including those from Indigenous backgrounds and regional and remote areas
- flexibility in service provision and mode of delivery to effectively meet the diversity of needs for consumers
- a shift to wellness-oriented programs that aim to engage with consumers across the acuity spectrum rather than crisis-focused care

Q: What does better look like?

A: 'Flexibility in funding and resource allocation to provide for services in regional and remote Queensland'

Community engagement

There were calls for a greater presence and more active engagement from mental health services in the community.

Recommendations included:

- community-embedded services that engage consumers via key institutions such as schools, general practitioners, and other community-based services
- a holistic approach to mental health care that involves integration with other health services to promote wellness
- early intervention-based services aimed at preventing mental-health crises. This includes a focus on perinatal and child and youth-oriented services.

Q: What needs to be different?

A: 'A greater emphasis on early intervention, perhaps working in conjunction with the local schools'

Promotion and awareness

In addition to changes in service delivery, responses also called for initiatives to raise the level of understanding of mental health issues by working with media, health-care providers and the general community in order to:

- promote awareness that mental health issues affect all types of individuals across the spectrum of age, gender and cultural background as well as the family and carers of these individuals – mental Health is a community-wide concern
- de-stigmatise mental illness so that consumers are afforded opportunities to engage with the community through meaningful employment, activities and relationships in a non-discriminatory environment

Q: What do you think is missing?

A: 'Educating the community to reduce the stigma associated mental health and substance abuse issues.'

The information gathered from the online survey represents an important addition to the QMHC's evidence base and will be used to help shape our shared plan for mental health and substance misuse reform in Queensland.