

## Media statement

15 September 2016

### **Families and carers must be more involved in mental health discussion**

Families and carers are often the most informed about the mental health of their loved ones. Skilled clinicians play an important role, but it is the families and carers who know them best.

A report released by the Queensland Government yesterday (14 September) highlighted the importance of communication with families as well as community education to address stigma and misunderstanding of mental illness.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck said that despite bringing discussion of mental illness into the light, a false belief that people with mental illness are violent continues to persist.

“Public statements by a number of high profile people in recent months that link violence and terrorism to mental illness have not been helpful in addressing the issue of stigma to ensure better mental health and wellbeing for Queensland,” Dr van Schoubroeck said.

Queensland Health released its response to a sentinel events review<sup>1</sup> into homicide and public sector mental health services.

Dr van Schoubroeck said the report noted “an unacceptable level of stigma and misunderstanding of mental illness”.

The report also noted that other social disadvantages and complex factors can lead to offending and violence.

Dr van Schoubroeck said it was pleasing to note that the Queensland Government had accepted in-principle all 63 recommendations of the report.

“An appropriate governance model that provides the necessary responsibility and accountability around state-wide services delivered equitably across Queensland is critical in ensuring that these recommendations make a positive difference to the lives of Queenslanders,” she said.

ENDS

\*\* NOTE \*\* Please use the Mindframe guidelines for reporting, portrayal and communication about suicide and mental illness in the media. <http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media>

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Health response to the *Final Report – When mental health care meets risk: A Queensland sentinel events review into homicide and public sector mental health services*