



Government of **Western Australia**
Mental Health Commission



Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission



JOINT MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONS AND LEADERS COMMUNIQUE

Australia's federal and state mental health commissioners and leaders have joined forces to insist that responses to the COVID-19 pandemic must tackle physical and mental health and social and economic issues on an equal and integrated footing.

We remain committed to working collaboratively to understand the pandemic impacts on the community's mental health and wellbeing and people's access to the mental health supports and services.

Reducing the spread of the virus has resulted in disruption to social connections, community activities and everyday life. For some, this has meant loss of work and income, increased financial worries, isolation, supporting school children at home while trying to work at home and run a household and added stresses from living in close quarters during lockdown. For those living with a mental health issue, this stress can have a greater impact.

We acknowledge these difficult circumstances, but also the strength of individuals to support each other, knowing that the critical days of the pandemic will pass.

While many may struggle with mental health issues -- some for the first time -- it is essential to reinforce that services and supports are available and can make a tremendous difference to peoples' wellbeing, particularly early intervention services. A priority is maintaining awareness of those services, and ensuring they are used. It is critical that people with existing mental health issues have access to responsive and effective services, and that they are encouraged to come forward and seek help.

We applaud the efforts of all governments to prioritise and fund new and expanded mental health and wellbeing supports during this time.

We welcome the income support initiatives to reduce the financial pressures on individuals, families, and the business community.

We recognise that a person's mental health and wellbeing are tied to their sense of purpose, and that loss of a job, a business and the opportunity to have something meaningful to do can add to the stresses people are experiencing. The disruption to daily life on the scale that we have experienced during the pandemic should not be underestimated.

We advocate a person-focussed response to the pandemic, where mental health and physical health impacts are tackled on an equal footing, along with the social and economic issues in people's lives and livelihoods.

We support the holistic directions of the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan and will work collaboratively across jurisdictions and the mental health sector to ensure the best outcomes for people are achieved now and over coming years.

Catherine Lourey, Mental Health Commission of
New South Wales

Ivan Frkovic, Mental Health Commission -
Queensland

Dr Lynne Coulson Barr OAM, Mental Health
Complaints Commissioner – Victoria

Dr Elizabeth Moore, Office of Mental Health and
Wellbeing – ACT

Jennifer McGrath, Mental Health Commission –
Western Australia

Christine Morgan – National Mental Health
Commission

David Kelly, Heather Novak & Sharon Lawn –
Mental Health Commission, South Australia