Mental Health Commission
Department of Health
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Alcohol and Other Drugs Ministerial Advisory Panel – Communique Meeting 1 September 2026

This Communique provides stakeholders with information and outcomes from the meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Panel (MAP) held on 1 September 2026.

The MAP provides direct feedback to the Minister for Health; Mental Health; Preventative Health (Minister) about system performance and reform progress. This advice contributes to the delivery of a system that adopts a person and family-centred approach and encapsulates whole of system priorities. The MAP is also a forum through which the Minister provides updates to the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors on strategic priorities.

Minister's update

The Minister provided members with an update on a range of mental health and alcohol and other drugs priorities and initiatives.

The Minister highlighted recent developments across the health system, including the opening of the Mental Health Observation Area at the Bunbury Health Campus, the commencement of the Southwest Acute Care Response Team, and the launch of WISH, a virtual specialist mental health service for children and young people. Members were also advised of the release of the Chief Psychiatrist's Standard for the Authorisation of Hospitals under the *Mental Health Act 2014*.

The Minister updated members on work being undertaken with the Commonwealth Government on the development of a new National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, and associated engagement with sector peaks and stakeholders through the Mental Health Commission.

Alcohol and other drugs – quality, accreditation, licencing and regulation

Members considered a paper prepared by the Department of Health regarding quality, accreditation, licencing and regulation of alcohol and other drug services. Discussion focused on current work being undertaken to strengthen the State's ability to identify, investigate and regulate facilities.

Key discussion points informing advice to the Minister included:

- ensuring reform promotes transparency regarding service quality while recognising the contribution of both government-funded and non-government-funded services;
- development of supporting information and resources to assist people and families navigating available services; and
- consideration of independent and confidential complaints mechanisms to support accountability and continuous quality improvement.

Access to services and supports for young people aged 16-17

Members considered a member-led paper prepared by Ms Tanya Sim regarding access to public mental health services by young people aged 16 to 17 years and their families. Discussion focused on the need for developmentally appropriate services and supports for young people aged 16 and 17 years, including the challenges created by age-based service eligibility requirements. Members discussed the importance of ensuring young people and families receive the right support at the right time, and that transitions between services are flexible, safe and well-coordinated.

Key discussion points informing advice to the Minister included:

- the importance of including Lived Experience expertise within Infant Child and Adolescent System Transformation governance arrangements;
- ensuring young people, families and cares with lived experience are engaged in the design and implementation of services;
- the need to consider intersectionality, particularly the experiences of LGBTIQA+SB young people;
- supporting flexible transitions and warm handovers between services; and
- the importance of maintaining a focus on long-term system reform outcomes for children, young people and families.

Infant, Child, Adolescent System Transformation Project Update

Members noted the update provided during discussion of the previous agenda item.

The Minister provided an overview of the revised governance structure and implementation approach and advised members that the Mental Health Commission is developing options for how Lived Experience expertise will be represented within the new governance arrangements for the ICA Transformation Program.

Members were advised that implementation planning is continuing, including work to map current services and initiatives supporting recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General report and to identify opportunities to strengthen outcomes for children and young people.

Proposed priority matters for future MAP meetings

The Minister invited members to provide a short overview of key priorities for consideration to be addressed at future MAP meetings. The following topics were proposed by members:

Access to evidence-based, harm reduction drug and alcohol education
To discuss and provide advice on the need for evidence-based, lived experience informed alcohol and other drug education, to improve community literacy.

National Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention - Psychosocial Support
To discuss the development of the new National Agreement for Mental Health and Suicide prevention, including opportunities to uplift psychosocial supports in Western Australia outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Alcohol and other drugs and intersecting issues
To discuss the critical importance of connection between responses to alcohol and other drug issues and other domains (e.g. family and domestic violence, housing).

Wellbeing in schools
To discuss opportunities in school settings to improve student wellbeing.

Infant, Child and Adolescent (ICA) System Transformation project update
To receive progress updates regarding implementation of the ICA System Transformation Project and discuss system transformation outcomes and impacts.

Partnering with families to prevent crisis and criminalisation
To discuss opportunities to improve early engagement with families to prevent escalation to crisis, police and justice involvement, as well as the provision of safe and effective supports for families.

Alcohol and other drugs workforces
To discuss system challenges regarding recruitment and retention of alcohol and other drug skilled and qualified workers and explore system solutions.

Mental health and human rights
To discuss legislative opportunities to protect human rights to support people with mental health issues.

Alcohol and other drugs harm reduction
To discuss opportunities to strengthen harm reduction approaches and promote evidence informed and community-responsive approaches that reduce harms from alcohol and other drugs.

Restrictive practices in mental health settings
To provide advice on opportunities to progress improvements to the use of restrictive practices in mental health settings.

Providing effective crisis response pathways
To discuss opportunities to improve crisis response to ensure individuals are safely diverted away from the justice system.

Impact of Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award Review outcomes
To discuss the system level change requirements in response to funding adjustments that will be required following the Fair Work Commission's 1 June 2026 decision on gender-based undervaluation of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award, inclusive of recognition for Lived and Living Experience.

Mental health supports for older adults
To discuss opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for older adults.

The following topics were proposed by members out of session:

Targeted suicide prevention and mental health responses for LGBTIQA+SB communities
To discuss how the mental health and alcohol and other drugs system can improve suicide prevention and mental health responses for LGBTIQA+ communities, including the need for lived experience/community-led/peer services to be adequately incorporated into service design, workforce development, data collection, and commissioning.

LGBTIQA+SB inclusive mental health and alcohol and other drug services – improving safety, access and workforce capability
To explore barriers to service access and consider opportunities to embed LGBTIQA+SB inclusive practice, workforce development, service standards and accountability across the mental health and alcohol and other drugs system.

LGBTIQA+SB young people's mental health
To discuss why targeted LGBTIQA+SB responses should be considered when developing mental health and alcohol and other drugs services for young people.

The Minister will consider these topics and identify priorities for future meetings. Members will be invited to provide papers or presentations to support MAP discussion and provision of advice.

Joint Leadership Group Update

Members noted a brief update from the Joint Leadership Group meeting held on 9 July 2026.

The next MAP meeting is scheduled for 3 December 2026.

You may distribute this Communique to your wider networks. Communiques and other relevant documents for the JLG, CAG and LEAG are available on the Mental Health Commission website.