



Mental Health
Commission



Western Australian Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2026-2031

Frequently Asked Questions



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Mental Health Commission acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of this country and its waters. The Commission wishes to pay its respects to Elders past and present, and extend this to all Aboriginal people seeing this message.

Recognition of Lived Experience

We recognise the individual and collective expertise of those with living and lived experience of mental health, alcohol and other drug issues, including their families and carers.

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Why was a new mental health and alcohol and other drugs strategy developed?

- The State Government committed to developing a new five-year, mental health and alcohol and other drugs system-wide strategy as part of the Government Response to the Independent Review of WA Health System Governance.

What is the importance and purpose of this Strategy?

- The Strategy's purpose is to guide the transformation of Western Australia's mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems to empower and support people, families and communities in their wellbeing.
- The Strategy is the key strategic document for the State, guiding the priorities and areas for focus for the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems over five years.
- The Strategy provides a shared purpose for government, non-government, private providers and community, including those with a lived or living experience, and their families and significant others.

How was the Strategy developed?

- At the Mental Health Commission (Commission), we created a Discussion Paper to help start conversations with the community.
- The Discussion Paper was based on reviews of current services and programs, key themes from other policies and strategies, and summarising information received through other previous consultations.
- Public feedback on the Discussion Paper was invited through written submissions, a survey, a phonenumber and participation in workshops (online and face-to-face) across Western Australia.
- We also provided grants to key organisations to consult with their own community members.
- This information was then used to develop a draft Strategy.
- There was then the opportunity for stakeholders to provide final feedback of the draft Strategy's Aspirations and strategic priorities, to make sure the final document accurately reflected what people in Western Australia said through the consultation processes.

How were people with lived and living experience engaged when developing the Strategy?

- Many different voices were heard from across Western Australia to inform the development of the Strategy.
- This included people with lived and living experience, their families, carers and significant others in every region across Western Australia.
- We also provided grants to key community organisations to undertake direct engagement with their own communities, including people with diverse cultural backgrounds, LGBTIQ+SB communities, people living with disabilities and Aboriginal people.
- Consumers of Mental Health WA also helped create a supportive environment for people with lived and living experience during in-person and online workshops.
- For more information, please see the [Consultation Summary report](#).

How will the Strategy be implemented?

- The Strategy's implementation needs to be flexible and adaptive.
- At the Commission, we will develop Annual Implementation and Monitoring Plans (AIM Plans) that detail specific actions that will be implemented each year.
- These plans will outline the actions the Commission and other key partner agencies are leading or facilitating and help track progress.
- The AIM Plans will be further supported by the Commission's Agency Commissioning Plan that sets out the guiding principles, intentions and focus areas for commissioning over the short and medium term for community services.
- As the Strategy is a high-level document, frameworks may be developed to support the implementation for particular issues or population groups requiring more targeted directions, such as suicide prevention.
- Regular updates and highlights of key achievements will be shared through our [website](#).
- Please subscribe to our [Stakeholder Connect e-newsletter](#) and follow the Commission through our social media channels for updates on the Strategy's successes.

How will we evaluate the Strategy?

- The Commission will develop AIM Plans to keep the Western Australian community informed of achievements, challenges and next steps. These reports will demonstrate progress against the previous year's AIM Plan and will be published on our [website](#).
- This will be supported by the Commission's person-centred Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Outcomes Measurement Frameworks, which provide one

approach for monitoring alcohol and other drugs and mental health outcomes in the Western Australian population.

How will the Strategy address the needs of particular regions and population groups?

- The Strategy is necessarily broad as it covers the entire Western Australian population.
- However, we know that some groups of people need specific consideration as they are disproportionately impacted by mental health and/or alcohol and other drugs related issues.
- The Strategy aims to recognise the similarities, as well as the unique differences of the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems and sectors, the regions and the intersections of culture, religion, language, gender, sexuality, health, disability, trauma and determinants of health and wellbeing.
- As the Strategy is a high-level document, frameworks may be developed to support the implementation for particular issues or population groups requiring more targeted directions, such as suicide prevention.
- While the Strategy's Focus Areas include the priorities for all of Western Australia, Appendix G of the Strategy includes regional profiles which recognise the unique needs and mental health and alcohol and other drugs priorities specific to each area.

How is this Strategy different from past strategies?

- The Strategy continues to focus on reforming the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems, building on past achievements, while at the same time, responding to changing environments and needs of communities.
- Like the previous Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2020-2030 (Plan), the Strategy continues to adopt a strong people-centred, needs driven focus, as well as increasing investment in prevention and community-based services.
- This will help to keep people well in the community, out of hospital and connected to their family, friends and community.
- Whilst lived and living experience has been an increasing focus over the last 10 years, there is still more to be done, and this is central to ensuring appropriate programs and services into the future.
- A key difference from the previous Plan, is this Strategy does not define specific targets on bed numbers and hours of service but rather focuses on systems level priorities that will help to achieve a balanced system across the continuum of services.

Will the Strategy be funded?

- The Strategy does not specify who is responsible for funding or delivering services.
- This recognises that the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems are the responsibility of government, non-government, private providers and the community.
- As the key guiding document for the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems in Western Australia, it can be used to help inform decisions about future program and service development.
- Annual Implementation and Monitoring Plans will provide an overview of the Commission's key actions over the immediate term.

Why can't I see my service or work program in the Strategy?

- The Strategy does not refer to specific service providers, rather it outlines the five Strategic Pillars which reflect whole-of-system priorities ranging from approaches to promote wellbeing for everybody through to specialised supports and acute services for those who need them.