



Mental Health Recovery Colleges In Western Australia

Frequently Asked Questions October 2017

What is a Recovery College?

Recovery Colleges complement existing mental health, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) support services by enabling self-directed recovery and mental health, and AOD learning opportunities in a safe and welcoming place. Recovery Colleges aim to support individual recovery through creating an education platform, and a reduction of stigma relating to mental health, and AOD problems.

Recovery Colleges are based on the co-design of the model of service and education-based approaches with consumers, their families and carers, and those who work with them in health services and non-government organisations.

What does recovery mean?

Personal recovery in mental health is defined within the National Framework for Recovery-oriented Mental Health Services as 'being able to create and live a meaningful and contributing life in a community of choice with or without the presence of mental health issues'. It is acknowledged that recovery is personal and means different things to different people.

What is co-design?

Co-design engages consumers, their families and carers, and health workers in the design and development of services. It involves partnering between all of the people who are affected by decisions and services at every stage in decision making from problem identification to design, development, delivery and evaluation.

Why are Recovery Colleges needed in our community?

With one in five Australians affected by a mental health disorder each year, access to appropriate community based services that help people recover and to manage their mental health issues is essential.

In December 2015, the Mental Health Commission released the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015–2025 (the Plan).

The Plan outlines the optimal mix and level of both mental health, and AOD services required to meet the needs of Western Australians. It also aims to address co-occurring mental health, and AOD problems. The Plan has identified the need to develop and expand local recovery services that offer assistance and support to individuals to maintain personal recovery and live well in the community.

The aim is to keep people out of hospital, improve their mental health and wellbeing, and to help to prevent further illness. Recovery Colleges will help to close a significant gap in access to services for people who do not require hospitalisation but would benefit from an opportunity to focus on improving their resilience and recovery.

Where are Recovery Colleges currently operating in Australia?

Mind Australia initiated the Mind Recovery College™ (MRC) in 2013 as the first of its kind in Australia. The MRC is modelled on earlier international initiatives from the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. The MRC operates in Victoria out of its central Cheltenham campus and a number of satellite campuses across the state. It also has two locations in South Australia. There are Recovery Colleges in New South Wales including the South Eastern Sydney Recovery College and Western Sydney Recovery College, which deliver courses across a number of locations.

In Western Australia, the Mental Health Commission currently provides funding to the Broome Community Recovery Centre, which aims to create a community providing assistance and support to individuals on recovery journeys without stigma. The Recovery Centre provides mental health, and AOD support programs and training.

Where will the new Recovery Colleges be located in Western Australia?

The exact locations will be determined through the co-design process. However the State Government has identified Wanneroo and near Royal Perth Hospital as preferred locations as part of the 2017 election. Consideration will be given to various models including 'hub and spoke' delivery.

What progress has been made to date?

In late 2015, the Mental Health Commission part funded the development of a Western Australian Recovery College Business Model, which was coordinated by the Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), with the support of a number of non-government organisations. In 2016, the Recovery College of Western Australia Steering Group was independently formed to progress this work.

In the 2017-18 Budget, the State Government has provided the Mental Health Commission with \$200,000, to develop a comprehensive model of service for Western Australia. This will build upon the work undertaken to date and progress it to the stage of a full business case proposal that meets the requirements of the Budget process.

What will happen in the future?

The Recovery College model will be designed to address mental health and co-occurring AOD issues. There are many models of service for Recovery Colleges. The Mental Health Commission will review a range of models including the previous Business Model coordinated by WAAMH, to inform the development of a unique model of service for Western Australia.

The Recovery College model of service will consider the provision of learning opportunities about recovery and wellbeing designed for: people with mental health, and co-occurring AOD issues, their families and carers; staff of mental health service providers; and staff and volunteers of non-government service providers.

The Mental Health Commission will progress the development of a comprehensive model of service for Recovery Colleges that addresses the particular needs of Western Australians who experience mental health and co-occurring AOD issues.

This will be undertaken through a co-design and consultation process with a broad range of stakeholders including consumers, their families and carers, and those who work with them in health service providers and non-government organisations.

This process will include the establishment of an Expert Panel through an Expression of Interest process. The panel will consist of a range of representatives that will facilitate the co-design of the model of service in conjunction with the Mental Health Commission project team.

Once the co-designed model of service is developed, the Mental Health Commission will present a formal business case that meets requirements of the 2019-20 Budget process. This will enable thorough informed consideration of funding and implementation by the State Government.

Who can I contact?

For more information or to provide input, you can contact the Mental Health Commission project team in writing, by telephone or online. Please visit the Mental Health Commission website www.mhc.wa.gov.au or phone (08) 6553 0600.