



MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION LEADERS FORUM

COMMUNIQUÉ

17 March 2016
Perth, Western Australia



The leaders of Australia's national and state-based mental health commissions met in Perth on March 17 for an annual forum aimed at sharing information and identifying ways to work more collaboratively to improve mental health and wellbeing.

National Mental Health Commission Chief Executive Officer David Butt attended along with Commissioners Timothy Marney (Western Australia), John Feneley (New South Wales), Lesley van Schoubroeck (Queensland), and Stephen Christley (South Australia). Victoria's Mental Health Complaints Commissioner Lynne Coulsen-Barr along with New Zealand's Mental Health Commissioner Kevin Allan participated by phone.

The following matters were discussed:

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health

1. Professor Pat Dudgeon and Chris Holland provided an update on the work of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health (NATSILMH) forum.
2. **Commissioners agreed to continue to support NATSILMH** as a leadership group for indigenous mental health. All Commissioners are very supportive of the *Gayaa Dhuwi* (Proud Spirit)



Declaration and look forward to receiving guidance from NATSILMH on practical ways to promote it.

3. Commissioners look forward to hearing a progress report from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP), including a critical response project being trialled in WA where a team goes into communities following a suicide. The **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference will be held in Alice Springs, 5-6 May.**
4. The NSW Mental Health Commission and NSW Health Ministry are co-hosting on behalf of Australia and New Zealand the **2017 International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL)** week-long Leadership Exchange. As part of this, knowledge exchange sessions, known as matches, will be held across Australia and New Zealand culminating in a two day **meeting in Sydney in February 2017.** It was agreed that the preferred approach is to provide an opportunity for exchange in each jurisdiction prior to the full meeting in Sydney. NATSILMH will advise for the NSW Commission on the host for the Indigenous exchange with both Western Australia and Queensland offering support.

National issues

5. Commissioners discussed concerns about the way in which the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** will accommodate people with complex needs.
6. Commissioners agreed to write to the Federal Department of Health Secretary Martin Bowles regarding the **Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MHiMA)** project review to reinforce the need for a national entity and recommending that collaborative governance to provide advice to governments on policies and programs.
7. It was agreed that the Commissioners would recommend a secretariat model attached to an entity such as the NMHC, or hosted by a State body with links to jurisdictional and national policy agendas and with nationally-agreed governance as the immediate next step.
8. It was noted that the due date for the **5th National Mental Health Plan** is now June 2016 and with the abolition of Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council (ASPAC), the NMHC will provide advice to the Minister on suicide prevention initiatives.
9. All States commented on their positive working relationships with the **Primary Health Networks** and anticipate collaboration on a range of matters, including suicide prevention, as the Networks become established.
10. Commissioners noted a number of projects focusing on **mental health and work** with New South Wales and Queensland both accessing the expertise of Tony Coggins from the Maudsley Institute. Western Australia is developing a "mentally healthy workplace standard" with the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
11. Physical health and mental health remain important issues for all jurisdictions. Commissioners look forward to the statement that is now being finalised for consideration by the Safety and Quality Partnership Standing Committee (SQPSC).



Consumers, families and carers

12. Commissioners noted that funding for Mental Health Australia (MHA) to develop a national mental health consumer and carer organisation representatives has not progressed.
13. QMHC is currently finalising a project on best practice principles for engagement and will share this with other jurisdictions.
14. NSW MHC has developed a Peer Work Guide, to be released by June, and is working on development of an overarching lived experience framework.
15. Commissioners agreed to provide input to a paper being developed by QMHC that illustrates the different approaches to human rights protection across jurisdictions.

Alcohol & Drugs

16. It was noted that only Qld, WA and NZ's Mental Health Commissions have Alcohol and Drugs in their remit. Furthermore, NSW has moved system management for Alcohol and Drugs out of mental health into the wider health system.

State updates

Commissioners provided the following brief updates:

New South Wales:

17. Established and co-chairing with NSW Health Ministry a state Suicide Prevention Forum and will promote *Communities Matter* for rural and remote communities to implement suicide prevention initiatives in small towns and local communities.
18. Published a Medication and Mental Illness report supported by lived experience and clinician videos and will be publishing a Mental Health and Physical Health guide in April as well as a "Living Well in Later Life" guide in April/ May.

Western Australia:

19. The MHC will launch an online services directory in May, in conjunction with the implementation of a new social media strategy. The directory is based on the National Health Services Directory initially. This will be augmented later in the year following the completion of a state-wide project to map all mental health and drug and alcohol services, which is being undertaken in partnership with the WA Primary Health Alliance.

South Australia:

20. Commissioner appointment imminent, with a Commission budget of around \$2M and staff of 6-10 people.



Queensland:

21. A review of the effectiveness of the QMHC is required by legislation before the end of June 2016 with any subsequent changes to legislation to be considered as soon as possible after that.
22. A number of Action plans have now been published as well as a Performance Indicators report on mental health and wellbeing in Queensland within the framework of national targets and indicators recommended by the COAG Working Group in 2013.

Victoria:

23. Dealing with high numbers of enquires and complaints, predicting almost 1,700 in 2015/16, and developing systems for analysing themes from complaints reported by mental health services to inform education activities and recommendations for systems improvements.

Participants:

National Mental Health Commissioner www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au	David Butt
New South Wales Mental Health Commissioner www.mhc.nsw.gov.au	John Feneley
Queensland Mental Health Commissioner www.qmhc.qld.gov.au	Lesley van Schoubroeck
Western Australia Mental Health Commissioner www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au	Tim Marney
South Australia Mental Health Commissioner www.samentalhealthcommission.sa.gov.au	Stephen Christley
Victoria Mental Health Complaints Commissioner www.mhcc.vic.gov.au	Lynne Coulson-Barr (by phone)
New Zealand Mental Health Commission www.hdc.org.nz	Kevin Allan (by phone)