

DEPUTY PREMIER'S SPEECH – MENTAL HEALTH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – MEETING 1¹

- Good morning everyone and welcome to the first Mental Health Executive Committee meeting.
- I am excited to be here this morning to launch the first meeting.
- Back in March I announced several new governance arrangements for the mental health, alcohol and other drug services in Western Australia, including the establishment of the MHEC.
- I also announced the establishment of a new role at the MHC, the Chief Medical Officer, Mental Health, and as you know, Dr Sophie Davison has been appointed to undertake this position.
- Sophie's role is critical in strengthening the Commission's leadership role as it will provide clinical expertise, contribute to strategic planning and policy development, strengthen consumer and community focused clinical care, and liaise with non-government services to support system integration.
- Sophie is also the Deputy Chair to the MHEC and Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council and the Chair of the Mental Health Leads Sub-Committee.
- Since March, much has happened. I am pleased, as I am sure you all are, how well our State has responded to COVID-19 and the resulting outcome that has meant important work like this can begin and get the attention it deserves.
- It also means we are able to meet face to face – another sign that Western Australia is getting on with business.
- Today, is an important part of 'getting on with the job' of addressing the significant pressures on the mental health, alcohol and other drug system in Western Australia.
- Bringing you all together through this Committee, to drive this reform together and work collaboratively to lead the implementation of the Government's intentions and objectives for mental health, alcohol and other drug services is an important part of the reform we need for the public health system.
- We know the public health system needs work. And it needs consumers and carers to be central to the development and delivery of that work.
- This is why Amanda and Kerry are here as members of the MHEC and the Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council and will play a critical and valuable role in advising us and driving this reform.
- I have met and heard from so many extraordinary people throughout Western Australia who are looking for help from the Government, and there are so many more that we will never hear from, as people continue to go about managing their mental health and alcohol and other drug use and finding solutions in the best way they can.
- Kerry and Amanda are here to represent them and 'keep us honest' in ensuring consumers and carers are at the core of our thinking.
- Today is an important first step for us all to come together to consider how as leaders, we set ourselves up for future success.
- Each one of you in this room is critical to ensuring we make progress that will have real outcomes on the ground.
- The last 50 years have been a time of enormous change.
- We have been moving from institutionalised and restrictive treatment practices into better treatments and more dignified care. The community sector has grown significantly, with grassroots organisations springing up and widespread acknowledgement and support within the community of conditions such as depression and anxiety.
- We need to keep a firm eye on the longer-term vision and continue to work towards that.
- So what is that longer term vision?

¹ This is an abridged version of the speech given by the Deputy Premier Roger Cook at the MHEC meeting on 19 August

- **Our vision** – our collective vision – from all the many organisations and individuals that contributed – is the State’s 10 year mental health, alcohol and other drug services plan.
- The Plan remains contemporary and the vehicle for guiding our work in mental health, alcohol and other drugs.
- It sets out our vision for the future – a Western Australian system that enables reduced mental health problems, suicide and suicide attempts, and minimal alcohol and other drug harms.
- It highlights that we want a balanced system, with adequate community services to keep people out of hospitals.
- We want to provide recovery-oriented care, tailored to the individual.
- It describes the importance of prevention services, of further developing inpatient services, and of having a system that enables everyone to work together, to encourage and support people to live a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life.
- There is a lot of work to do and I’m asking you, the people in this room, to lead this work, collaboratively with each other and your stakeholders.
- Earlier this year I released a set of Priorities for mental health, alcohol and other drugs in Western Australia. These provide focus to the large number of actions in the Plan and clarity around the immediate steps and issues to focus on, to have the maximum positive impact on the system.
- These Priorities are informed by the Plan, as well as reports by the Chief Mental Health Advocate, Chief Psychiatrist, Auditor General, Sustainable Health Review, strategies and frameworks developed by the Mental Health Commission and others.
- We know that the system is under significant strain at all levels, but we also know that we can do something about it.
- A lot of the quick wins have been done, however to really transform the system, we need strong leadership to make the changes that most need to happen. I’m speaking here of transformational change. The type of change that rebalances the system, enhances system integration and delivers the type of services that truly impact the recovery journey for people and communities. There are challenging decisions that will need to be made, by all of us.
- We know we need to add services to the system and we know we need more investment. But we also know that we need to look at how we improve the services we currently have to achieve system reform.
- The MHEC is a critical vehicle and the driving force behind this whole-scale public health system reform.
- I am commissioning you to drive, lead and support the development, reform and delivery of a better public health system.
- Yes, this is ambitious. But it needs to be ambitious. There are many Western Australians whose health and lives depend on it.
- We need to have the courage of conviction, of knowing that history will judge us kindly if we step up and work together to develop and lead the world in innovative, consumer-focused and excellent mental healthcare.
- The public health system and the community sector, through the MHEC and Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council, will need to work together in partnership with consumers, carers and families to achieve these ambitious goals and drive reform of the whole mental health and alcohol and other drug system.
- Thank you, to each of you, for your ongoing hard work, leadership and dedication.
- By combining our collective efforts, we can truly deliver best practice to those who need mental health, alcohol and other drug treatment and support.