

A/COMMISSIONER'S SPEECH – COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG COUNCIL – MEETING 1¹

- Good morning everyone and welcome to the first Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council meeting, or CMC as I will refer to from now on.
- I would particularly like to welcome Amanda Waegeli, the consumer representative, and Kerry Hawkins, the family/carer representative, on the CMC and the MHEC.
- Amanda and Kerry's presence on the CMC and the MHEC was at the Minister's request and demonstrates that we are all aligned in making sure we have consumer and carer involvement in the Commission's work going forward and bringing lived experience to the heart of policy decision-making.
- Amanda and Kerry, I am so pleased that you wanted to be part of the CMC and MHEC and I look forward to the valuable input you will bring.
- I know everyone would agree with me that listening to Walter and Amanda was very inspiring and has helped to set the scene for the CMC and why we are here today.
- I would like to echo the Minister's comments that the establishment of the CMC is a very exciting development.
- I am personally looking forward to working closely with you all to tackle the significant challenges we have ahead of us.
- And I know Sophie Davison, Chief Medical Officer, Mental Health and my Deputy Chair feels the same way.
- On Wednesday we had the first MHEC meeting. And I am sure Sophie, Amanda and Kerry will all agree with me in that even though it was only the first meeting, it reinforced why we need these governance structures and the establishment of the MHEC and CMC.
- I will get into particular examples later when we progress through the papers. But in my short time as A/Commissioner, I know this is of no surprise to any of you, there are many needs identified by the community that require careful consideration and appropriate prioritisation. However, as you would all well know, there is not necessarily an easy or logical way of prioritising certain programs, reviews, etc.
- Health Service Providers have their priorities, and the community sector have their own too.
- So what we need to do as a collective, between the CMC and the MHEC, is drive system integration and reform and connect the clinical space with the vast network of the community sector.
- You are all here today as important parts of the sector and I need you to step up and be leaders across the sector, with the ability to always view things with a system-wide lens. I need you to be part of the whole system and what is best for the whole system.
- I encourage you to make sure you are feeding back to your respective networks and energising your networks to connect and drive this reform agenda.
- As I have been reflecting to many people recently, I believe that the easy wins, the 'low hanging fruit' as I like to say, have all been achieved.
- What faces us now is the really hard challenges that can only be achieved by all of us working together to achieve real, sustainable system-level change.
- It's not going to be easy and it's not going to be a quick fix either.
- The first agenda of the CMC is setting the scene for a few big things that we need to undertake over the next four years.

¹ This is an abridged version of the speech given by the A/Commissioner at the CMC meeting on 24 August

- This is the only way to achieve a mental health, alcohol and other drug system that meets the growing needs and expectations of the Western Australian community.
- We knew the system was under pressure prior to COVID-19.
- But COVID-19 has ramped up and exacerbated these issues, with a larger and brighter spotlight on the needs and expectations of the system.
- COVID-19 has reinforced that the priorities identified in the WA State Priorities, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs 2020-2024 are absolutely the right ones for WA. We need to be transforming the system to increase service access; we need to strengthen and better connect the community mental health and AOD system; and we need to integrate services so the consumer is well supported through their recovery journey. We have some great challenges ahead of us to achieve this.....and we need great leadership.
- I acknowledge the issues across the system and funding allocation not being perfect.
- And we know that due to COVID-19, funding is going to be even tighter.
- We need to use the funding better, while advocating strongly and collaboratively with the community.
- To assist you in your roles as members of the CMC and being leaders in the system, we will be providing a communique after each meeting and a website portal that will have the Terms of Reference, CMC Charter, Communiques and the like that your teams can access at anytime.
- It's also important that the governance arrangements work for all members, making it possible for all of you to raise issues of system-wide importance that become apparent to you. And this can be done through the call out of agenda items by the Secretariat or raising with me as the Chair directly.
- The Minister made it clear that he wanted the first meeting to be in August.
- And we have done a lot in standing the CMC and MHEC up in a short amount of time, including getting the Secretariat up and running.
- It was also important to get the Terms of Reference for the Committee and the Charter done. The Minister stipulated that he wanted the Charter developed to guide the operations of the MHEC and CMC.
- Thank you everyone for being here today and I look forward to us achieving great things together.