

Independent Chair Communique No. 1

I am very pleased to provide you with my first update as Independent Chair of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents aged 0 – 18 years in Western Australia (the Taskforce).

It is a privilege to be tasked with leading this group of individuals with lived experience, agency leaders and clinicians and to develop a costed whole-of-system plan to reform infant, child and adolescent public mental health services in Western Australia.

Collectively, the Taskforce members seek to carry with us the passion, dedication and experiences of those with lived or living experiences of accessing public specialist mental health services and of those that work in these services every day. We will endeavour to give voice and reflect upon these experiences in everything the Taskforce does.

I am very pleased to announce that the first Taskforce meeting was held on 11 March 2021. It represented an important milestone and first step in what will be a challenging yet exciting and fast-paced process to deliver our Final Report by 30 November 2021.

Discussions between Taskforce members was rich and constructive. The interests of infants, children and adolescents, their families and carers, and the workforce that serves them, was at the centre of all discussions. During the meeting the Taskforce discussed the following key issues:

- The importance of developing a practical and achievable whole-of-system plan, including all funding and budget requirements to inform a phased implementation over the coming years.
- Leveraging, as much as possible, the decades of valuable work that has been undertaken in this space, particularly over the last five years.
- Building a system that does not stand in isolation, but one that integrates across both the health system and other Government agencies such as Education, Justice, Housing, Disabilities and Child Protection.
- Ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience, including young children, comes through in everything the Taskforce does.
- Ensuring that the Taskforce addresses issues relating to access and equity in our system, particularly for Aboriginal infants, children and adolescents, and those in rural, regional and remote locations.
- The importance of supporting and building our workforce across the State who are feeling the weight of the last few years and who will no doubt have very high expectations for the work that the Taskforce has been asked to do.

Concurrently the Taskforce has been working to establish three Expert Advisory Groups (EAGs): Lived Experience EAG, Clinical EAG and Interagency EAG. We have received an overwhelming number of applications from extraordinary applicants for the Clinical and Lived Experience EAGs and hope to launch each in late April 2021. Work to finalise the Interagency EAG is underway and will be via an invitation process.

I would lastly like provide a reminder that we have set up a dedicated webpage on the Mental Health Commission (MHC) website that is the central information hub for all Taskforce activities and information. We will use this website to provide a communique after each Taskforce meeting and provide updates on engagement and consultation activities. Please check the page regularly to ensure you keep updated.

If you have any questions or feedback relating to the work of the Taskforce please email CATaskforce@mhc.wa.gov.au

Robyn Kruk AO

Independent Taskforce Chair