



## MENTAL HEALTH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE - MEETING 31 August 2021

The fifth meeting of the Mental Health Executive Committee (MHEC) was attended by the Minister for Mental Health and held on 31 August 2021. This communique provides all stakeholders with information and outcomes from this meeting.

The purpose of the MHEC is to lead the continuous development of a mental health, alcohol and other drug (AOD) system that is efficient, sustainable, recovery-focused, consumer-led and integrated. The MHEC works alongside the Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council (CMC) to ensure system integration and connection of clinical services with the wider mental health and AOD sector.

The key priority projects of the MHEC and CMC continue to be the [Community Treatment and Emergency Response Roadmap](#), Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents, [Graylands Reconfiguration and Forensic Taskforce](#) (GRAFT) and the Long Stay Patient Project. The MHEC is keen to ensure the key priority projects are well connected and strongly linked with state and national reforms. Further information on these priority projects is provided below.

### Minister for Mental Health address

The Hon Stephen Dawson, Minister for Mental Health, attended his first MHEC meeting to discuss his and the Government's priorities and to hear from the MHEC as they discussed their key focus areas.

The Minister reiterated that the mental health and AOD system is a priority for the Government, with the need for people to have more options in the community so there is less pressure on emergency departments and hospitals. The Government's \$494 million budget boost in mental health and AOD over the next four years will assist in doing this, with the majority of the investment to uplift community services and ease the pressure on emergency departments.

A focus for the Government is for services to be integrated from a whole of system perspective, not just from the mental health and AOD sector, but also across housing, education, community services and disability services to provide holistic care. As part of the Government's mental health boost, a \$129.9 million youth package seeks to link community-based services to ensure our young people are supported to recover with input from and partnership with their support networks.

The Minister stressed the importance of the key priority projects. Whilst new money in the budget is a positive step forward, there is still a lot of work to be done to look at how services are configured to best serve the people of WA. The key priority projects underway will assist with this by bringing our system together so people are provided the care they need along the recovery continuum.

The MHEC had opportunity to discuss with the Minister a range of key focus areas that will assist with system transformation. A brief summary of these themes are provided below. They include the need for:

- Improving the transition of care and continuum of care for consumers and their families between services and settings at every stage of their recovery;
- Strengthening the acute response service options available for those in the community to ensure alternative treatment pathways to ED;
- Developing clear system wide inclusion criteria that reduces the need for gatekeeping mechanisms such as exclusion criteria;
- Using modelling to quantify the demand for services and to determine what workforce is needed to support the successful implementation of new business cases;
- Maintaining a momentum on developing the workforce. This includes training and upskilling of staff to support the new services coming on board; development of the peer workforce to support the system in delivering appropriate and peer-led care to consumers; the need to retain psychiatrists; and contracts for staff and facilities they work in need to be considered in attracting and retaining the workforce; and
- Strengthening the voice of lived-experience in key decision-making forums and for service design and implementation initiatives that contribute to system transformation.

## **Mental Health Leads Sub-Committee**

The Mental Health Leads Sub-Committee (MHLS) meets monthly to assist the MHEC in driving and operationalising system-wide improvements and reform. Work continues around developing better treatment, care and support in the community. The MHLS have also been considering the capacity and capabilities required by clinicians, service providers and consumers and carers in successfully transforming and implementing new services.

The MHLS also agreed there should be consistent paid participation for consumers across the Health Service Providers (HSPs) for health and mental health.

## **Roadmap Project- Community Mental Health Treatment and Emergency Response Services**

The [Community Treatment and Emergency Response Roadmap](#) seeks to deliver fundamental system reform for public community mental health treatment and emergency response services. A Roadmap Steering Committee meeting was held on 27 July 2021 and the communique is available on the [MHC website](#).

Recruitment is complete for three Expert Working Groups (EWGs) whose role is to jointly develop models of care and pathways for consumers with varied needs, across primary care, community treatment and inpatient settings. The EWGs represent metropolitan, regional and remote, and emergency response stakeholder groups. Consultation will occur at every stage of the project, with strong lived-experience representation. Meetings have begun with the HSP Chief Executives on engaging their clinical teams and to determine future workforce requirements. The timeframe to complete the project has been extended to allow for appropriate consultation and targeted interviews for this major reform project.

Consistent demand modelling across GRAFT and the ICA Taskforce and Roadmap continues through collaboration between with Departments of Health and Treasury and the MHC. The modelling will inform the future types and mix of services that are needed for the key priority projects.

## **Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents aged 0-18 years in Western Australia**

The Ministerial Taskforce seeks to develop a whole of system, state-wide vision and plan for State Government funded public specialist mental health services for infants, children and adolescents. The final report will be delivered by 30 November 2021 and will make recommendations to the Minister for Mental Health with actions and a costed implementation plan.

The [Emerging Directions Paper](#) was released publicly on the MHC's website on Thursday 26 August. It will form the basis for more in-depth consultation and research to support the development of new models of service. The MHEC raised that the vast majority of regional WA doesn't have dedicated youth investment, which is an urgent issue. Our regional children and youth are a priority as they are continuing to experience an ongoing unmet need and while virtual services are under development, there is much more work to do to provide the necessary support and access to services locally.

Further information on the Taskforce, including regular communiques, is available on the [MHC website](#).

## **Graylands Reconfiguration and Forensic Taskforce (GRAFT)**

The GRAFT project aims to inform the Government's planning and investment decisions regarding the Graylands hospital site, forensic mental health services and the nearby Selby Older Adult Mental Health Service. The work aligns with the [WA Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025](#), which highlighted the need for these services to be decommissioned, divested and replaced with contemporary infrastructure and services.

A recruitment process for the Lived Experience Advisory Group and the Clinical Advisory Group has commenced which will provide advice and assist the Taskforce in their decision making. In addition, the work for the older adult cohort will need to link in with the work of the Roadmap project as this cohort requires different models of care and there is a need to ensure the interface with the community and aged care sectors is well captured.

## **Pressures on Emergency Departments and in-patient beds**

MHEC were informed of strategies addressing the immediate pressures on emergency departments and inpatient beds. A number of initiatives are being developed to transition long stay patients back to the community. This work will inform future models of care.

## **Psychiatric Hostels**

Work is being undertaken with health service providers, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, Mental Health Advocacy Service and Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit (LARU) to identify short, medium and long-term options to improve the quality of life and consistent safety and quality standards for residents of psychiatric hostels. MHEC raised that physical and dental health needs to be addressed when reviewing standards of care and the MHC will feedback on how lived-experience can become part of the monitoring and planning going forward.

## **Eating Disorders Election Commitment**

The WA health system has seen an increase in patients seeking treatment for eating disorders in the community and increased pressure on the acute hospital system resulting in increased emergency department presentations, inpatient bed days and hospital readmissions. As part of the 2021 Labor Government Election Commitments, \$31.6 million has been committed to the expansion of WA eating disorder treatment services, including the establishment of eating disorder specialist hubs and community prevention supports. As part of this funding and expansion of specialist services, there will be specialist coordinators and multidisciplinary teams, with care navigation and coordination for patients to be supported in the community.

## **Joint Regional Plans (JRP)**

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) presented on the WA Foundational Plan for Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services, and Suicide Prevention, which outlines the intersecting service provision commissioned and delivered by the WA Mental Health Commission, HSPs and WAPHA, to enhance access to care across the broader WA healthcare system. The MHEC raised the need to ensure coordination and collaboration between primary, local health services and the community sector in the planning and implementation of the plan and current mental health reforms.

## **WA State Priorities Quarterly update**

The August 2021 Quarterly Update on all system reform projects currently underway across the sector was endorsed by MHEC and is available on the [MHC website](#).

## **Items for Noting**

Other topics that were on the MHEC agenda for noting included the launch of MHC's Stakeholder Connect, recruitment initiatives as part of the Mental Health Workforce Planning Project, progress towards the implementation of the Community Care Unit and the Mental Health Act Statutory Review.

## **The next MHEC meeting is scheduled for 23 November 2021.**

*Please feel free to distribute this Communique to your wider networks. Communiques and other relevant documents for the MHEC and CMC are available on the [MHC's website](#).*