

MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 10, 2023

Attendees	Tracey Young (TY), Richard Oades (RO), Virginia Catterall (VC), Jennifer Wilton (JW), Lee Steel (LS), Jessica Nguyen (JN), Nafiso Mohamed (NM)	Mental Health Commission Djeran, L1, 1 Nash Street Perth WA 6004 and MS Teams Thursday, 10 August 2023 08:30am – 11:30am
Chair	Margaret Doherty (MD)	
Deputy Chair	Patricia Councillor (PC)	
MHC Support	Cecile Levacher, Caitlin Murray, Larissa Barnao	
Guests		
Apologies	Paul Parfitt (PP)	
Non-Attendees		
AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION LOG
1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners	The Chair acknowledged the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation. Respects were paid to Elders past, present, and future for their knowledge and traditions. It was noted the next couple of months may be a challenging time for Aboriginal communities as the public debates the Voice referendum noting being an ally at this time will be important.	
2. Welcome and apologies	The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies.	
3. Recognition of Lived Experience	The Chair recognised those with lived and living experience and acknowledged the emotional labour that comes with bringing these perspectives into discussions. The emotional courage and persistence required to draw on this expertise was both recognised and appreciated and lived experience voices need to be at the forefront of the Council's conversations. The Chair also noted the recent passing of Lived Experience leader, Debra Sobott, independent systems advocate who led seminal work at Curtin University on the adverse effects of neuroleptic medication. Her passing will be deeply felt within the lived experience community.	
4. Member check In	Members did a round table check in.	
5. Reflection item	The Chair presented the reflection item: Eleanor Longden – Learning from the voices in my head . Members discussed the following: – A pivotal point in Eleanor's journey was recognising the voices she heard had begun disrupting her life. Acknowledging that these voices came from a place of unresolved childhood trauma and unpacking this was an important aspect of her journey.	Note: Lee Steel to provide reflection item for next meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The importance of delivering 'human' services was identified, noting relationships are an important component of an individual's recovery.- Eleanor's story of perseverance and hope was inspiring as she continued her own health journey when the traditional system didn't know how to effectively manage suitable responses to her.- The bio-medical model often 'labels' an individual with a diagnosis. A lack of positive messaging and general education about certain presentations of mental health challenges which may be described within that model as 'illnesses' can create fear within the general community due to a lack of understanding.- To be given the priority it needs, mental health challenges must be considered as valid.- Appropriate supports need to be in place for individuals upon being diagnosed with schizophrenia or who present with hearing voices, with Eleanor's journey highlighting the importance of funded systemic advocacy.- Individuals with physical health issues receive services based on the risk of harm to their individual health and there is a predictable health response. If an individual's mental health is not a perceived risk to anyone else, not just themselves, receiving the help a person needs is often more difficult.- Members recognised the Hearing Voices Network is an invaluable support for voice-hearers who may have been given a diagnosis of schizophrenia, noting that this approach is not readily available or embedded in our current system.- Western Lapland has adopted evidence-based programs such as Open Dialogue (https://opendialogue.org.au/) to help young people via early intervention, with eighty eight percent of the individuals returning to fulltime employment within five years.- There is an international movement advocating to abolish the diagnosis of schizophrenia as an illness.- It was noted some individuals have been diagnosed with schizophrenia despite not meeting the diagnostic criteria. This enables the individual to access particular medication via the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to treat another medical condition. These diagnoses have been made with good intent, however the long-term impact to an individual due to discrimination surrounding the diagnosis of schizophrenia may not have been considered.- Emotional regulation and cultural understanding need to be considered when treating someone who is hearing voices.- Members felt successful evidence-based approaches to help individuals with diagnoses of schizophrenia or who may be voice-hearers, need to be further investigated.	
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<p>6. Conflicts of interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Catterall is on the Community Mental Health Treatment Services (CTER) Lived Experience Reference Group. - The Chair noted Mental Health Matters 2 Ltd, of which she is Chairperson, is also on the Community Mental Health Treatment Services (CTER) Lived Experience Reference Group. 	<p>Note: Secretariat to update the Conflict of Interest Register.</p>
<p>7. Acceptance of previous meeting minutes</p>	<p>Council members endorsed the 11 May 2023 meeting minutes.</p>	
<p>8. Action log</p>	<p><u>Completed actions:</u> These were discussed and noted.</p> <p><u>Outstanding actions:</u></p> <p>Action 251: Members were reminded to provide their updated CV to the Secretariat.</p> <p>The Chair also noted the outcomes of the Independent Governance Review (IGR) are still to be announced so Members' Council appointments are only being extended by three months until January 2024.</p> <p>Action 230: The Chair advised that following a request, the WA Recovery College Alliance had provided an update. The Commission has offered WARCA a one-year contract extension however the contract value has not been increased. Discussions are now underway regarding what services can be viably funded whilst still maintaining the integrity of the framework. The Commission will advise WARCA in September 2023 whether they will go to open tender for provision of future services. Members noted the courses would not be effective if delivered via a TAFE style program.</p>	
<p>9. Budget</p>	<p>Members were updated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Acting Commissioner had endorsed the 2023-24 budget, as per the written confirmation of previous budget allocation by Jennifer McGrath, previous Commissioner. - There has been some challenges with obtaining up-to-date financial information over the past twelve months despite numerous requests. Recent figures provided by finance indicated the Council is overbudget at end of financial year on a figure which is nearly \$30,000 less than the figure confirmed in writing. - The Chair has not accepted the current figures provided. The need for the Chair and the MHAC to retain financial autonomy as an independent Council was noted and as per its Terms of Reference. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Wheatbelt Consumer and Carer Advisory Group is very active, and their newsletters are distributed to other CRCs. Feedback from readers has been very positive with people saying it has really made a difference to them. - Nine communities have launched the 'Aging in Place' program with quantitative data to be captured over the next 18 months. The success of the program illustrates the power of community via connection and wellbeing outcomes. A link to the program will be sent via the Secretariat to members. - CRCs have not received a funding increase for three years and there will be no further increase for the coming three years. Advocacy for increased funding is underway. <p><u>Tracey Young</u></p> <p>Mental Health community connection, co-design and desert landscapes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our country may be considered barren, but there are pockets that flourish and are adaptable. This analogy can also be used within the mental health system. - Services and sectors in mental health that utilise best practice work as partners and value young people and families. The Drug and Alcohol Youth Service and Youthlink are good examples of this. Their work is valued as their focus is on building up a conversation to strengthen connections. - Youthlink is a mental health service with a community referral pathway. - Many consumers don't trust a service, but rather trust the people working within the service. - Active consumer participation has increased which is encouraging. - Current systems within services are rigid and lack a focus on building and maintaining genuine community relationships and partnerships. - Consumers are seen as their 'diagnosis' and defined by their 'cost' rather than as an individual. - Specific language must be used when applying for a service otherwise an individual will be declined access. - There are a number of metropolitan mental health organisations however many of their connections to community and partnerships are poor, and they are not valued by the community. <p><u>Virginia Catterall</u></p> <p>Community Mental Health Treatment Services Emergency Response Project (CTER):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The original scope was broad in relation to infrastructure and community service delivery. 	<p>September / October meeting.</p> <p>Action 255: Secretariat to distribute a link to 'Aging in Place' to members.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet endorsed the final stage of the project in January 2023 however there is limited project support and access to expertise to deliver upon the initial scope of the project. - Three reference groups, two of which include Lived Experience representation have been implemented to help achieve project deliverables within tight timeframes. These include a Project Reference Group, Lived Experience Advisory Group and Clinical Advisory Group. <p>Graylands Reconfiguration and Forensics Taskforce (GRAFT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Lived Experience Advisory Group and GRAFT have concluded. - The future governance of the GRAFT initiatives has yet to be decided. <p>Mental Health Networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Forensic Mental Health sub-network has not met since November 2022. <p>General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Metro Health Service will now reimburse consumer and carer representatives on the Start Court at the same rate as the Commission’s Paid Participation Policy which is a significant positive step. - The Health Consumers Council has implemented a Consumer Leadership Program targeted to encouraging a more person-centred health care system. - International overdose awareness day will be held on 31 August 2023. It is important to remember those community members who have been lost to overdose and support people who still use drugs. - The University of Sydney has released its Co-Morbidity Guidelines and have free, open training available (https://comorbidityguidelines.org.au/). - The Commission has funded Holyoake to provide community prevention services in a number of regions. <p><u>Jennifer Wilton</u></p> <p>Update on primary care including at home services via Silver Chain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerable groups such as the homeless, elderly, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) and Indigenous Australians with social and emotional wellbeing concerns continue to be neglected. - Availability of housing and affordability of expenses such as rent, and food continue to be the biggest issues. Assisting clients to source these basics has become an important part of service provision. - Workforce availability is an ongoing issue. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since many General Practitioners (GP) ceased bulk billing practices, many patients are unable to afford attending their GP resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Nurse practitioners needing to write more general scripts. o A lack of continuity relationships between GPs and their patients which is important when treating ongoing health concerns. - Many clients have had their National Disability Insurance Scheme funding reduced and are being advised to access mental health services via a Mental Health Care Plan which is organised via a GP. - Application forms to assist with expenses such as taxis are geared towards individuals with a physical disability and do not cater for those with mental health related issues. This is problematic as claims will be denied if the correct language is not used on forms. - The cost for adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to access a psychiatrist is preventing many clients from attending, resulting in unmet needs. - Gaps between services still need to be addressed. <p><u>Patricia Councillor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Thirrili - Indigenous Suicide Postvention Service</u> provides support to families who have lost loved ones to suicide or death by other tragic circumstances. A genogram is undertaken to identify the broader family network so appropriate support can be provided. - Police contact Thirrili if there has been a completed suicide, so appropriate cultural support can be provided. - Providing links to other services is an important component and relationships are key to successfully achieving this. - Thirrili is hosting an event with Queernarvon and the LGBTIQ+ community. <p>Note: Any family, friend, community or organisations can notify Thirrili on 1800 805 801 with a notification of an Indigenous death through suicide or any other tragic death, including deaths in custody and as a result of family and domestic violence.</p> <p><u>Nafiso Mohamed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy is important to help individuals with mental health issues obtain secure employment. - The difficulty of measuring mental health indicators that affect employment, specifically within the CaLD community was recognised. - Government policy and program teams need to work together for a shared outcome. - A holistic overview is important to ensure the human experience is not overlooked. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking at how to make jobs more purposeful is important. - Funding for small community multicultural organisations within Perth is not continuous or consistent. This continues to affect the ability to provide job security to employees and it is important advocacy for this continues. - Shame still surrounds mental health within the CaLD community, creating a barrier to accessing the services which individuals require. <p><u>Jessica Nguyen</u></p> <p>Community Opioid Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes to the Community Opioid Program came into effect on 1 July 2023. - Increased government funding of the program means the program is now more affordable for patients. - Conversely, pharmacies will receive considerably less remuneration and the administration required is higher, without relative remuneration. As a result, many pharmacies are not taking new people into the program which is disheartening. - People now have easier access to opioid replacement therapy which is positive. <p>Sixty-day dispensing of eligible pharmaceuticals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certain classes of medications for chronic or stable conditions can now be dispensed for a 60-day period, at the same cost of a one-month supply. - This will reduce the cost of some medications by half and will reduce GP attendance for scripts. - Medications to treat mental health concerns were not included on the initial medications listed. <p>Mental health pharmacist workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the last survey prior to COVID, there were approximately five thousand hospital pharmacists. It is estimated only fifty of these pharmacists are mental health trained, noting this is proportionally low. - Funding to increase this number is required, as are staff retention strategies such as permanent positions. <p>The Chair and Richard Oades will provide their member update via email.</p>	<p>Action 256: Jessica Nguyen to provide the UWA survey on the pharmacist workforce.</p> <p>Action 257: RO and MD to provide their updates to the secretariat via email.</p>
<p>BREAK</p>		

11. Member profile	Patricia Councillor’s profile will be carried forward to the next meeting.	Note: Patricia Councillor will provide the Member Profile for next meeting.
12. Discussion on presentations and advice to the Commissioner	- N/A.	
13. Other business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council meeting was held 1 August 2023 and a Communique will be released. - Outcomes of the Independent Governance Review are still to be released. 	
14. Values reflection	Council members provided Values reflections as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity of opinions were covered. - Members spoke about the principles that underpin recovery. 	
Meeting closed at 11:27am		
NEXT MEETING	Thursday, 14 September 2023	