

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Background

The Mental Health Advisory Council (Council) was initially appointed by the Honourable Helen Morton MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Disability Services in May 2011. In October 2019, eight new members were appointed by the Honourable Roger Cook MLA, Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Minister for Mental Health.

Two members, Dr Pauline Cole and Ms Emily Wilding resigned after two years and almost three years respectively due to personal and work commitments during the most recent twelve-month period.

Dr Pauline Cole's experience as a consultant psychiatrist with a speciality in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) informed psychotherapy provided Council with a valuable perspective in exploring effective options and responses in this area and advocating for people with diagnoses of personality disorder.

Ms Emily Wilding is a strong advocate for LGBTQIA+, young people and addressing systemic factors that contribute to disadvantage. Her input contributed to inclusivity, equity and diversity being at the forefront of Council discussions.

The Council appreciates the richness and guidance Pauline and Emily contributed to in Council discussions.

The current members of the Council are:

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ms Margaret Doherty (Chair) | Ms Lee Steel |
| Ms Patricia Councillor (Deputy Chair) | Ms Tracey Young |
| Ms Jessica Nguyen | Ms Virginia Catterall |
| Dr Richard Oades | Ms Nafiso Mohamed |
| Mr Paul Parfitt | Ms Jennifer Wilton |

Diversity

The Council is proud of their its membership with individuals being appointed from groups and communities whose voices are often under-represented. The Council includes members from the following communities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander;
- Regional, rural and remote areas (Geraldton, Donnybrook, Northam, Pingelly);
- Culturally and linguistically diverse; and
- Consumer and Family/ Significant Other Lived Experience.

Council members represent a variety of lived experience and professional backgrounds. Further information about individual Council members can be found [here](#).



Purpose

The purpose of the Council is to bring together representatives from the Western Australian community to provide high level, independent advice, and input to the Mental Health Commissioner (Commissioner) regarding major issues affecting Western Australians experiencing mental health challenges, their families, carers and service providers.

The Council provides a forum for information exchange between key stakeholders as well as discussion about broad issues relating to mental health.

Role and Function

The Council provides independent, highly focused, and practical advice to the Commissioner, on mental health issues including:

- Effective implementation of the *Mental Health Act 2014*;
- Effective implementation of the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plans;
- Reform, strategy implementation and broad directions for enhancing mental health and wellbeing;
- Improvements to funded programs to better support people with mental health challenges, including through better coordination and integration of existing mental health programs;
- Appropriate strategies for developing and implementing mental health programs for people with particular needs, including ways to improve quality, access and sustainability of mental health services in Western Australia; and
- Any other items as requested by the Commissioner.

Additional information is available in the Council's [Terms of Reference](#).

Executive support is provided to the Council by the Commission. Ms Larissa Barnao and Ms Tanya Dobson provided support to the Council during this period.

Meetings

The Council is required to meet no less than four times per year. Meetings are usually held monthly, excluding January. The duration of meetings are three to four hours and may be attended in person or online.

In March 2022, the annual regional trip was postponed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The trip was re-scheduled to 9 and 10 November 2022 with members travelling to Geraldton. Comprehensive and insightful discussions took place regarding mental health, alcohol and other drug services, and lived experiences within the region.

On 9 November 2022, the Council met with representatives from the City of Greater Geraldton (CoGG) community development team and the mental health sector. A number of innovative local projects to improve mental health outcomes within the region were discussed including:

- Passport to Employment: a nine-week program for young people with disabilities;
- Community based diversion programs and on Country programs to promote awareness and early intervention;
- A dedicated Youth Officer and Crime Prevention Officer; and
- A twelve-month community development program CoGG developed in conjunction with the WA Primary Health Alliance which includes targeted initiatives for mental health.

On 10 November, the Council held a panel discussion with local representatives from across the mental health sector to gain insight into local mental health service provision. Panel members included:

- Lisa Pinkey Coordinator of Nursing & Midwifery, WA Country Health Service – Midwest
- Deborah Childs – Chief Executive Officer, HelpingMinds
- Deborah Woods – Chief Executive Officer, Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service
- Garrick Horsham – Recovery Coordinator, Fusion Australia

Panel discussions were followed by a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country provided by local Aboriginal Elders. A networking morning tea was held for over fifty local stakeholders, providing a high level of engagement and energy from many community members, including the Mayor. The event was well received by guests, providing an opportunity for local service providers, people with lived experience and other key stakeholders to network.



Panel Guests and Council Members – Geraldton, 10 November 2022


Minutes from the Geraldton regional trip can be found on the [Council's page](#) on the Mental Health Commission website.

Values

Council members are committed to:

- Value and respect diversity and work in an inclusive and accessible way with particular sensitivity to advocating for the most unheard voices;
- Explore innovation in mental health with curiosity and seek out the best local, national and international practices; and
- Promote hope for recovery of individuals experiencing mental health issues and their families/carers.

On a rotational basis, members provide a short reflection item at the beginning of the meeting which is recovery focussed and aligned to the Council's work.



Members conclude meetings by reflecting upon how well the values and processes were achieved during meeting discussions. This reflective process helps keep the values at the centre of the Council's work and ensure a relational rather than transactional approach.

The Council also uses principles of co-production to guide its processes and practices. Feedback is sought from guest presenters to ensure discussions are held in a safe working space.

Priorities

The Council priorities for the 2022-23 period were:

- Effective implementation of the *Mental Health Act 2014*;
- Effective implementation of the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plans;
- Reform, strategy implementation and broad directions for enhancing mental health and well-being;
- Improvements to funded programs to better support people with mental health challenges, including through better coordination and integration of existing mental health programs;
- Appropriate strategies for developing and implementing mental health programs for people with particular needs, including ways to improve quality, access and sustainability of mental health services in Western Australia;
- Young People's Priorities for Action including mental health services for young people in detention;
- Applying a Cultural and Linguistically Diverse lens to mental health;
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme, access and availability for those with psychosocial disability; and
- Prevention, early intervention and diversion for youth at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Guest Presenters

The Council would like to thank the guest presenters who provided specialised information which informed Council's Advice to the Commissioner. External presenters included (in order of attendance):

- Jane Armstrong, LGBTQIA+ Officer, East Metropolitan Health Service
- Dr Robyn Williams, Senior Research Fellow, Curtin University
- Professor Dorothy Badry, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
- Jamie Foley, Department of Health (DoH), Michelle Gadellaa, Graylands Reconfiguration and Forensics Taskforce (GRAFT), DoH, Samantha Amato, State Forensic Mental Health Service, North Metropolitan Health Service
- Michael Watts, Chairperson, WA Recovery College
- Naomi Carter, Principal, WA Recovery College
- Dr Michael Verheggen, WA Branch Chair, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Gillie Anderson, Policy Officer, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Pavlina Heiderova, Acting Coordinator Community Development, City of Greater Geraldton
- Peter Treharne, Coordinator Community Development, City of Greater Geraldton
- Uncle Charlie, Mental Health Commission's Aboriginal Elders in Residence

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- Aunty Helen, Mental Health Commission's Aboriginal Elders in Residence
 - Leonie Dick, Wheatbelt Coordinator, Wheatbelt Mental Health Service
 - Dr Sophie Davison, Chief Medical Officer Mental Health, Mental Health Commission
 - Lisette Kaleveld, Centre for Social Impact, University of Western Australia
 - Bill Gye (OAM), Chief Executive Officer, Community Mental Health Australia
 - Eamon Ryan, Inspector of Custodial Services, Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services
 - Simon Katterl, Simon Katterl Consulting

Several Commission staff provided updates on initiatives, receiving direct feedback from the Council. The Council appreciates the input from these individuals and their ongoing commitment to improving the mental health, alcohol and other drug systems outcomes for the community.

Conclusion

The Council continues to be committed to providing independent, informed and robust advice to the Commissioner. It also continues to be dedicated to privileging the lens of people with lived experience to inform system transformation.

The outcome of the Independent Review of WA Health System Governance has provided a clear direction for the Mental Health Commission and outlined the sector governance reforms required to better meet the needs of individuals, family members and significant others who use services as well as people who work within them.

The Council is committed to supporting the Commissioner in this significant task.

Yours sincerely



Margaret Doherty

CHAIRPERSON

16 November 2023