



Queensland
**Mental Health and Drug
Advisory Council**

Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council Meeting

Cairns – 18 April 2024

COMMUNIQUE

The Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council (the Council) met in Cairns on 18 April 2024.

Meeting highlights

Harm reduction in Queensland prison settings

The Council discussed blood-borne viruses and injecting-related infections in Queensland prisons, and the actions by Queensland Corrective Services and Queensland Health to address the issue.

The Council noted action 3.1.4 of the *QCS Drug and Alcohol Action Plan 2021–22* which aims to investigate joint public health initiatives including blood-borne disease education and awareness, bleach and consideration of a needle exchange program.

The Commission will explore opportunities with Queensland Corrective Services to enhance harm reduction practices within the prison system.

Human Rights

Council members discussed the report by the Chief Psychiatrist titled *Mental Health Act 2016 Report: Review into the use of Seclusion, Mechanical Restraint and Physical Restraint under the Queensland Mental Health Act 2016*. Council members noted concerns around the ongoing use of seclusion and restraint in mental health services and noted the response of the Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland (MHLEPQ). The Council noted the importance of ensuring the perspectives of people with lived and living experience are heard and included.

First Nations

The Council received an update on the Commission's work to develop a community-led suicide prevention approach in four remote and discrete communities in Far North Queensland.

The Council noted that the Commission is finalising its Cultural Capability Plan and working closely with local government champions to progress work to address suicide in First Nations communities. The Council highlighted the need to continue to further progress system reform in this area

Lived-Living Experience

The Council discussed the Commission's work with the Lived Experience Leadership Advocacy Network (LELAN) to develop a lived-living experience governance framework for the Commission.

The Council discussed the Readiness, Willingness and Ability (RWA) survey created for the Commission by LELAN. The Council will be provided with the interim RWA audit survey data until the full report is available, which will include insights from the interviews with Commission staff members and external partners.

General update

Other discussions included:

- A paper from MHLEPQ on psychosocial hazards experienced in the peer workforce.
- Challenges regarding how Qscript is implemented and the risk of adverse impacts on people's ability to access medication.
- Concerns were raised about access and education regarding take-home naloxone.
- Proposed amendments to *the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* about the inclusion of substance use as a disability.
- Issues arising from increased demand in refugee and migrant communities, including long wait times for services, lack of alternative options, and lack of interpreter services. Council members agreed that there needed to be greater training, regulation and quality assurance for interpreting services.
- Progress of the Commission's stigma reduction campaign.
- The Commission's work on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Tracking Cube project.

Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 20 June 2024.