Who we are
Ten Commissioners (*pictured above*), including the Chair and CEO, make up Australia’s first National Mental Health Commission. The Commission reports to the Prime Minister and works closely with the Hon Mark Butler MP, who has been appointed as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform. Read more about the Commissioners at: [http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/people](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/people)

We were established on 1 January 2012 in recognition of the importance of taking a national and cross-sectoral leadership approach to mental health reform. We are a small, focused agency with an accountability and advisory role. We are not a fund-holding agency.

Our role is to:
- monitor, evaluate and independently report on the performance of the systems that support Australians with a lived experience of mental health issues. Central to this will be the publication of an annual National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- provide independent advice to the Australian Government
- engage people with a lived experience of mental health issues, their families, carers and other support people in what we do, and
- build relationships and partnerships across government and the community to leverage effort and outcomes.

Launch of the Commission
The Commission was formally launched on 23 January by Minister Butler.

The event was well attended by people from across many sectors, and opened with stories from people who have a lived experience of mental health issues both personally and as a family member. Their experiences provided an inspirational start for the Commission’s work.

National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
The Report Card is our core responsibility, and will be produced annually to report on the performance of the systems that provide support for people experiencing mental health issues. Development work is continuing, but we envisage the Report Card may have a number of different elements including:
- qualitative and quantitative information on experience, access and services

Our work so far Since January the Commission has:
- met twice, in addition to out of session work
- met with over 150 stakeholders
- drafted a three year Strategic Plan
- published Operating Principles, meeting minutes & communiques
- commenced consultations on the National Report Card on Mental Health & Suicide Prevention

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• case studies and input from people with lived experience of mental health issues, their families and carers, to help give the data a human face
• input from leaders across the many mental health systems and sectors through a consultation process.

The first Report Card – which we have been asked to produce by the end of 2012 – will use existing data and information, but will set the scene for data and information developments in future report cards.

A major component of our consultation will be an open online survey. To find out what people across Australia think the Report Card should focus on, the online survey will be translated into multiple languages and will be advertised in major newspapers, through mailing lists of peak organisations and on our website. The survey runs from 28 April to 8 May.

To stay involved, keep an eye on our website: http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/report_card

Roundtables
Minister Butler is launching our Roundtable discussions on 26 and 27 April, to gather ideas for the Report Card. Invitees include people with a lived experience of mental health issues, their families, carers and other support people along with representatives from peak organisations, service providers, workers, academics, and government and business leaders.

Western Australia visit
On 1-2 March we travelled to Perth to meet with the WA Mental Health Commissioner, senior WA Government officials, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health services, the WA Ministerial Council on Suicide Prevention and other representatives from across the sector at a morning tea hosted by the WA Mental Health Commission.

The trip also included a visit to a number of services including specialist in-patient mental health facilities and an innovative youth service and was a valuable opportunity to learn more about WA's mental health reforms.

Key dates
The Commission will meet at least six times a year. Each Commission meeting will include a day dedicated to meeting with people involved in the local mental health and other support systems and visiting services.

Meetings for the rest of 2012 are scheduled for:
8-9 May, QLD
20-21 June, VIC
15-17 August, NT
3-4 October, SA
21-22 November, NSW

Stay in touch
Please visit our website and subscribe to our updates to stay in touch:
http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/contact

South Australia visit
On 14-15 February we visited South Australia to connect with individual services that support people with mental illness. We met with the SA Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, visited employment and housing services, senior executives in the South Australian departments of Health and Housing, NGO service providers and the Glenside Hospital redevelopment. We heard first hand about the priorities for mental health in SA such as employment sustainability, the importance of housing connected to multidisciplinary teams, suicide postvention and links to primary care.