A quick round up

The National Mental Health Commission has been operational for six months and in that time the Commissioners (pictured above) and staff have been working hard to progress our full work program.

To date we’ve held three official meetings and a planning day, met with over 350 stakeholders from around the country, held a series of roundtables and conducted a national survey to inform our thinking on the National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and signed MOUs with the Mental Health Council of Australia, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

We’ve just released our first major policy which, significantly, is a Paid Participation Policy recognising the specialised and expert contributions made by people who have a first-hand experience of a mental health difficulty or family members or support people. It sets out how much we will pay, when and for what, so that individuals understand the Commission’s position prior to engaging with us. It also commits us to plan and budget for people’s participation. You can read the policy at www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au.

We’ve also developed a strategies and actions plan which will be published in the coming weeks on our website.

Commission meetings

The second meeting was held in Brisbane 8-9 May

Commissioners spoke and answered questions at an open forum, attended by over 50 local stakeholders and the Queensland Minister, the Hon Lawrence Springborg MP.

Commissioners also travelled to Brook RED www.brookred.org.au in Brisbane East to meet with members of the community and the Board of Directors. They found the visit inspirational, hearing first hand of the impact Brook RED has had on people’s lives, providing them peer support with a sense of purpose, as well as an understanding, social and creative space to help them in their own recovery journey.

The third meeting was held in Melbourne and Geelong 19-20 June

CEO Robyn Kruk and Pathways CEO Paul Napper at MadCap Café

Commissioners visited the MadCap Café in Geelong www.madcapcafe.org and learnt about how the business is supporting people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties through employment and training opportunities.

Commissioners also visited two Geelong based services: PARC www.pathways.org.au and headspace www.headspace.org.au, their first visits as a group in a non-metropolitan area. They also spoke and answered questions.
at an open forum in Geelong, attended by over 30 people with lived experience, family members, service providers and workers from across the Barwon region. Issues discussed included the Report Card and its purpose, the role and priorities of the Commission, access to quality support, the value of including families, the need to support people of all ages and with a range of conditions, and the need for strong communication and collaboration across services.

National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

The Commission is progressing work on the first Report Card having completed consultations through roundtables, meetings and an online survey which over 3000 people completed.

At the recent meetings in Brisbane and Melbourne Commissioners reaffirmed their commitment to use the Report Card to talk about mental health as a whole of life issue and one that expands beyond government and health services; and to use the Report Card to showcase examples of what is working well, as well as to identify areas for further improvement or consideration.

The Report Card will also use case studies and input from people with lived experience of mental health issues, their families and support people.

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

Youth Engagement

On 1 June, 25 young people from across WA were able to have their say on what they would like to see in the Report Card through a co-hosted Youth Roundtable with the WA Youth Mental Health Project Development Steering Group, in partnership with the WA Mental Health Commission.

The Roundtable gave us great insight into what young people feel is important. A few themes included knowledge about services available after school hours; recovery is possible; understanding from service providers that it is difficult to seek help.


As a part of their work they have launched a survey which is on the Commission’s website seeking the views of young people to input into the Report Card and more generally on their experiences with mental health & wellbeing. You can complete the survey here: http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/969478/d1858edbebb0

Key dates

The Commissioners have agreed to meet formally six times a year, and feel that it’s important to visit all states and territories in our first year of operation. The Chair and CEO have visited WA and will visit Tasmania in August.

The Commission also has three remaining official meetings which will all 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:

15-17 August: Alice Springs, NT
3-4 October: Adelaide, SA
21-22 November: Orange, NSW

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CEO and Commissioners at stakeholder forum in Geelong