

Queensland Mental Health Commission



The Queensland Government has announced the establishment of an independent Queensland Mental Health Commission from 1 July 2012. This critical reform will drive improved performance, coordination and transparency in the delivery of mental health services in Queensland. It is a cornerstone the Government's ongoing commitment to provide a recovery-oriented, high quality and consistent mental health system for all Queenslanders.

This factsheet has been prepared for those interested in how the Commission will be established and operate, and how it will impact on the delivery of services and the ongoing mental health reform process.

Mental health reform in Queensland

Guided by the *Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017* and the *Fourth National Mental Health Plan*, the Government has invested over \$632 million in mental health reform over the past four years. Together with the investment of an additional \$366 million in 2006-07, this brings the total investment in reform to over \$1 billion.

In 2011-12 alone, the Queensland Government is investing over \$1 billion in public mental health services throughout Queensland. This includes \$950.7 million for specialist acute and community mental health services through Queensland Health, and \$70.3 million for community support and accommodation services through the Department of Communities.

This investment in service delivery and reform is working. A recent evaluation of the first four years of the Queensland Plan has shown that this investment has:

- increased the capacity of mental health services
- built better links between treatment services and community supports
- provided more sustainable treatment
- enabled us to reach more people living with mental illness.

Queensland is progressing well towards the 10 year goal under the Queensland Plan of providing a comprehensive, recovery-oriented mental health system that improves Queenslanders' mental health.

But more work is still to be done. Big improvements are still to be delivered under the next phase of the Queensland Plan, the newly released Supporting Recovery:Community Health Service Plan and through the Australian Government's proposed 10 Year Roadmap for Mental Health Reform and the National Partnership Agreement on Supporting National Mental Health Reform.

Why is a Mental Health Commission needed?

International evidence suggests that a dedicated, stand-alone mental health commission can:

- sharpen the mental health system's focus on the needs of clients and their families
- enhance the coordination, effectiveness and performance of mental health services
- provide greater transparency in the allocation of resources and accountability for the results achieved, ensuring resources are deployed to where they are needed most
- develop a strong evidence base to support the funding and delivery of services
- promote greater use of research and evaluation in service development and delivery .

Mental Health Commissions already operate in Western Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Scotland and Ireland, and are being established in New South Wales and by the Commonwealth Government.

What will the Commission's role be?

The establishment of the Queensland Mental Health Commission will support further transformation and reform of Queensland's mental health system. It will position Queensland to better respond to emerging priorities, pressures and opportunities and to drive ongoing reform locally and nationally.

As an independent body, the Commission will provide strong leadership and advocacy, and ensure mental health is recognised as one of Queensland's most critical challenges.

The Commission will promote the recovery and human rights of people with mental illness, taking into account the full spectrum of issues affecting mental health



and mental illness. It will play pivotal roles in policy development, the allocation of funding and streamlining the mental health system.

How will the Commission operate?

Some of the Commission's core key functions will include:

- engaging with consumers, families, providers and other stakeholders
- providing independent mental health policy and planning advice to Government
- articulating key outcomes, defining services needed to achieve outcomes and ensure the most effective allocation of mental health resources
- facilitating coordinated and seamless services for clients
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting on performance
- leading implementation of national and state reforms and driving service innovation
- promoting awareness and social inclusion and combating stigma and discrimination
- promoting best practice and high quality care and support
- working collaboratively with the National Mental Health Commission and other agencies.

How will this affect existing services?

The Commission will not be directly involved in service delivery. The Queensland Government (via the Local Health and Hospital Networks on commencement of the National Health Reform) will retain responsibility for delivery of acute and community-based services. Community-based support services will continue to be delivered through the non-government sector.

The Commission will not take on any of the functions performed by the Health Quality and Complaints Commission. This body will remain Queensland's independent health complaints body.

How will the Commission be established?

The Commission will be established by 1 July 2012.

A Transition Team has been established to deliver on this government commitment. The team will be guided by an expert advisory group chaired by Professor Beverley Raphael.

The transition process will involve targeted expert and key stakeholder consultation and analysis of the relative benefits of models in operation or planned in other Australian and international jurisdictions. This will be followed by broad community consultation on a preferred model for Queensland, and finalisation of the strategic policy directions and governance structure of the new body.

For more information

Contact the Queensland Mental Health Commission Transition Team at QMHCTT@health.qld.gov.au