

Communiqué

16 August 2018

Sexual Health
Ministerial Advisory Committee

Preamble

The Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) was established to provide advice to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services on sexual and reproductive health-related matters in the context of the *Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2016–2021* and associated action plans.

The Committee is scheduled to meet quarterly. The inaugural meeting occurred on Tuesday 6 June 2017, followed by a meeting in September 2017. A period of ‘Caretaker Mode’ associated with the Queensland general election in November 2017, combined with the requirement for focussed effort following the North Queensland HIV Round Table held in October 2017, saw the February 2018 meeting held over. The committee then met as scheduled on 24 May 2018 and 16 August 2018.

This communiqué provides an overview of the progress made, both in- and out-of-session, since these Committee meetings. This includes the establishment of a Research Sub-Committee in March 2018.

September 2017 Committee Overview

The second Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) meeting occurred on Thursday 28 September 2017.

An update about the implementation progress of the *North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan 2016–2021* was presented to the Committee, which led into a discussion and the subsequent provision of advice from members to inform the development of the North Queensland HIV Round Table in October 2017.

A presentation about relationships and sexuality education (RSE) in Queensland’s state school curriculum and educational programs was delivered by the Department of Education and Training. Following this, Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service presented about the Lady Cilento Children’s Gender Clinic and Statewide Gender Service. A facilitated discussion followed which resulted in the Committee identifying further priorities for progression, and these were documented in a draft Committee Work Plan.

March 2018 Research Sub-Committee

On 27 October 2017 approval was provided for the establishment of a *Sexual Health Research Fund* to provide seed funding for translational research activities that will improve the delivery of sexual health services in Queensland and support implementation of the *Queensland Sexual Healthy Strategy 2016–2021*.

A Research Sub-Committee was established and met in March 2018. The Sub-Committee is charged with setting research priorities and will assess and approve applications for translational research which align with the priorities of the Strategy. A Research Fund administrator is currently being finalised, and it is expected that the first call for research proposals will occur late 2018.

May 2018 Committee Overview

The third Committee meeting occurred on Thursday 24 May 2018.

Updates were received by the Committee on the progress of the implementation of the *North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan 2016–2021* and the epidemiological landscape of sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses in Queensland. A facilitated discussion resulted in updates to the draft Committee Work Plan.

The Committee noted that the *Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2017–2018* report to Cabinet was being drafted, and that the Strategic Communications Branch, Department of Health, was developing a sexual health social marketing campaign which aimed to improve knowledge and awareness around sexual health, establish STI testing as the social norm and encourage sexually active young people to engage in STI testing.

The Committee confirmed that a stakeholder engagement forum would be held annually, with the theme and scope of each to be determined by the Committee in-session at the beginning of each year. Following a presentation received by the Committee about the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people, it was decided that this would provide a suitable theme for the inaugural stakeholder forum to be held in October 2018. A 'youth subcommittee' was formed to commence planning for this event.

The Committee discussed progress made with regard to the recommendations in the draft report from the North Queensland HIV Round Table (Round Table). A Round Table Sub-Committee was formed to finalise the report out-of-session. The Round Table Sub-Committee met in June 2018 to discuss and finalise the report for progression to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services.

August 2018 Committee Overview

The fourth Committee meeting occurred on Thursday 16 August 2018.

The Committee welcomed Ms Lisa Davies-Jones, Chief Executive of North West Hospital and Health Service, who attended in person to update the Committee on the progress of the implementation of the *North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan 2016–2021*.

This was followed by a brief discussion on the Strong Proud Healthy and Safe – Sexual Health and Relationships Education Curriculum Program, and an update from Dr Sonya Bennett, Executive Director Communicable Diseases Branch, on work underway in to support the HIV response in North Queensland.

The Committee received a presentation from the Strategic Communications Branch on the sexual health social marketing campaign for young people, and were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback on the website that will accompany the campaign.

A presentation on the sexual and reproductive health priorities of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people in Queensland was provided by Professor Ignacio Correa-Velez, followed by a facilitated discussion on the Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Stakeholder Engagement Forum being held in Brisbane on 10 October 2018.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday 22 November 2018 from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm.

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