

From the Chair...

A recommendation to establish a 'one-stop-shop' telephone line

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The importance of responding to mental health calls for assistance in an appropriate manner has been highlighted in The Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025. The Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) have therefore recommended to the Commissioner that a central “one stop shop” telephone line for mental health and drug and alcohol problems be established.

It is our view that this new line should replace the Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL). We also believe that the line should be based at the Department of Health so as to enable access to the Psychiatric Services Online Information System (PSOLIS) to assist with response decision making. Our suggestion is that the line be staffed by a Mental Health Clinician, a skilled Police dispatcher and a Peer worker with set protocols for dispute resolution.

The MHAC has also provided advice in support of the proposed Police Co-Response trial. It is important that both

services not only have a close working relationship but also that they involve consumers and carers in the design and delivery of the services.

Another recommendation that the MHAC considers a priority is the recommendation that Government commence the process of divestment of services on the Graylands and Selby hospital campuses. We believe that the successful implementation of this recommendation is seen as one of the key recommendations of the Plan. We would respectfully recommend however that an open and effective communication process be developed to update regular patients at both sites and in particular current inpatients and families.

The Plan is a very important step in the ongoing process of improving mental health services in Western Australia. The MHAC will be regularly reviewing the implementation of the Plan and providing relevant advice to the Commissioner.

Barry MacKinnon
Chair, Mental Health Advisory Council

Council Members

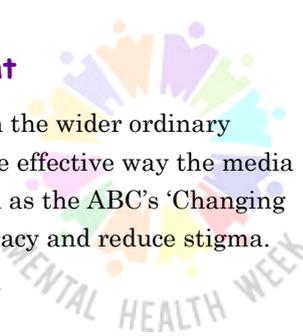
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Reducing stigma during Mental Health Week 2015 - Dr Bernadette Wright

Raising awareness of mental health issues in a responsible manner that will resonate with the wider ordinary community is a task requiring sensitivity and understanding. MHAC was impressed by the effective way the media handled Mental Health Week 2015. Not only were the interviews and documentaries such as the ABC’s ‘Changing Minds’ insightful and thought-provoking but they did much to increase mental health literacy and reduce stigma.



Mental Health Care at Acacia Prison - Margaret Doherty

Approximately 160 men at Acacia, of whom 33% are Indigenous, have a diagnosis of a major mental illness

It is well evidenced that people with mental illness are over-represented in prison. So, where better for members of the Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) to visit during Mental Health Week than the largest prison in Australia. At the invitation of the Commissioner for Corrective Services, Council members, Chris Gostelow, Margaret Doherty, Bernadette Wright, Lindsay Smoker, with Vanessa Randolph, of the Mental Health Commission, were guests of Acacia prison in Wooroloo. One of two private prisons in WA, Acacia has been operated by Serco since 2006 and can house 1395 adult male prisoners.



At previous Forums convened by MHAC, consumers and families have shared

their difficult experiences with imprisonment. The MHAC team welcomed the opportunity to meet with Serco management and staff, to learn at first-hand about the mental health services offered at Acacia.

Approximately 160 men at Acacia, of whom 33% are indigenous, have a diagnosis of a major mental illness. On average, the mental health nursing team within the prison has 120 one-to-one engagements with patients per month. They also support other prison staff who are involved in the care and management of these men. An important part of their work is to liaise with community agencies to help ensure their clients have ongoing mental health care when released from prison.

The visit was enlightening and the MHAC members appreciated the opportunity to both have a tour of the prison and also the opportunity to have full and frank discussions with Serco management and staff, whose work is guided by a Responsible Prisoner and Restorative Justice approach.

Member Profile: Dr John Edwards

After studying medicine, I was a GP locum in country towns. Subsequently, my Practice settled in Osborne Park. My interest out of necessity. Because it was difficult to access much help in I later became Foundation Fellow of the College of Physicians Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine and established Cambridge Clinic with four like-minded partners. The Clinic specialises in AOD and mental health problems and was later renamed Abbotsford Hospital. 2015 saw the opening of Blackwood Clinic - a day hospital with onsite accommodation near Nannup. Mental health problems have been a challenge in my personal life. My wife died from "misadventure" having struggled with bipolar illness for many years and father-in-law's partner was severely affected by depression, ultimately taking her own life. I am acutely aware of the helplessness felt by supporters/family and the difficulties in finding the right help. I feel privileged to be a member of MHAC particularly where there is a will and a vision for real change for the better in the politics and administration of mental health. When I joined I had 10 major points of change, half have been achieved or will be soon. I am pushing for the rest. Mental health will remain challenging but I have real hope that it will be more approachable and easier to negotiate services that have its clients' recovery as a focus.



from Geraldton to Karratha. in AOD and mental health came the system, "DIY" became the way. I

Values of the Mental Health Advisory Council

Value and respect diversity and work in an inclusive and accessible way with particular sensitivity to advocating for the most unheard voices;
Explore innovation in Mental Health with curiosity and seek out the best local, national and international practices; and;
Promote hope for recovery for individuals with mental ill-health and their families/carers