

Independent Chair Communique No. 5

I am pleased to be able to share this update as the Chair of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents aged 0 – 18 years in Western Australia (the ICA Taskforce).

In August the Taskforce held its sixth meeting. We reflected on the publication of the Emerging Directions Paper and early feedback, reviewed the consultation schedule and continued planning the next steps to ensure we are in a position to have a clear and robust vision for infant child and adolescent mental health services for WA with a final report and costed implementation plan ready by the end of November.

Emerging Direction Paper: The Crucial Issues for Change

On Thursday 26 August, the Taskforce published its paper, the [Emerging Directions: The Crucial Issues for Change](#). The Emerging Directions paper has been prepared to provide key stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on what we have learned to date and Taskforce's emerging vision for the future, including the scale of change required to achieve it.

The document has a few key elements:

- It articulates a case for urgent change and the scale of change required, and describes the key insights and findings of the Taskforce to-date
- It proposes the future vision, purpose and principles for future public infant, child and adolescent mental health services
- It outlines the strategy for delivering this vision through 10 interrelated 'emerging directions', to address critical service gaps; establish contemporary connected services that meet the needs of children and their families and set the foundations to ensure sustainability of the system for the long term.

I encourage you to read the report which is available on the website and to provide feedback via the online feedback form. Taskforce is particularly keen to hear of examples of good practice and service models that will help deliver sustainable future public infant child and adolescent mental health services. We would like to hear your ideas about how to put the strategies into practice recognising demand and workforce pressures.

So far there has been an encouraging consensus amongst service providers, children and families and carers and other stakeholders about the insights and directions in the Emerging Directions Paper. Initial feedback suggests there are some areas that Taskforce needs to explore in more depth including the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal children and families, access to services for children and families in rural and remote regions and for children and families from CaLD backgrounds, early intervention/prevention and workforce related issues.

Consultation

In the coming weeks, Taskforce will be engaged in a series of related critical activities. These include interviews with key stakeholders, and targeted consultation with key groups of young people, families and carers including: Aboriginal young people, families and carers; children and families from a CaLD background; LGBTQIA+ children and their families and carers; families and carers of children under 12; children with eating disorders and their families and carers; young people in out of home care; young people in the criminal justice system; and young people with neurodevelopmental disorder, families and carers. There will also be a series of regional workshops involving young people, families and carers and clinicians and service providers.

Expert Advisory Groups

The clinical, lived experience and inter-agency EAGs will meet again together as one group next week to consider the service requirements for the future system. They will be drawing on their

expertise and experiences, a summary of good practice approaches to infant child and adolescent mental health, as well as the extensive consultation. The challenge is to not only identify the key components of future services but also show how they all fit together in a seamless way and connect with other services and agencies such as schools and community services to provide child and family centred care to all those who need it in WA.

I am grateful for the wisdom, courage and compassion of dozens of children, young people, family members, carers, staff, service providers, and other stakeholders that have supported and continue to support the work of Taskforce. Your experiences and insights are absolutely crucial to developing a plan for child and adolescent mental health services that meet the needs of WA children and families.

Taskforce will submit its Final Report to the Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health in November 2021. We encourage you to submit your feedback by Friday 24 September.

If you have any questions, comments or feedback for the ICA Taskforce please email CATaskforce@mhc.wa.gov.au

Robyn Kruk AO

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Independent Taskforce Chair