

# ACT Mental Health Advisory Council

## Public Communique - Meeting 26

The ACT Mental Health Advisory Council (the Council) convened on 3 March 2022 to discuss the development of the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy (the Strategy) and the Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drugs Services (MHJHADS). The meeting was chaired by Sue-Ann Polden. The Council welcomed guest presenters Alisha Chand, A/g Change Leader, Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Office) and Michelle Jones, Operational Director and Tash Lutz, Assistant Director, MHJHADS to present on mental health workforce initiatives in the ACT.

### **ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy (the Strategy)**

The Council heard that the Strategy is in development following a motion that was passed in the ACT Legislative Assembly requiring the Office to lead in the development of a draft ACT Workforce Strategy. The Strategy will be presented to the Legislative Assembly on 21 March 2022. An overview was provided of the participants involved in the co-design process and shared key themes that were identified from the workshops. The draft Strategy was presented to the Council for their feedback.

### **Canberra Health Services / MHJHADS Workforce Plan**

The Council heard that the MHJHADS workforce is currently experiencing a number of challenges due to the impacts of COVID-19 on staff shortages and how this has resulted in an accumulation of unpaid annual leave, high levels of sick leave, border closures, staff turnover and poor retention rates. Strengths and opportunities were presented that the sector could draw from to retain and recruit more staff moving forward.

The Council and Minister considered the presentations and were encouraged to hear of the progress of the Strategy and the initiatives underway through MHJHADS.

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