

ACT Mental Health Advisory Council

Public Communique – Meeting of 9 December 2020

The Mental Health Advisory Council (the Council) convened on 9 December 2020. The meeting was chaired by Sue-Ann Polden and the focus of the meeting was on mental health reform.

Productivity Commission Report

On 16 November, the Australian Government released the final report from the Productivity Commission's (PC) Inquiry into the Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health (the PC Report) (available at <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health/report>). The Report is structured around five key areas for action and under each of these areas, identified priority actions and actions are set out. The Council considered the wide range of recommendations directed to the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

The PC also undertook a cost benefit analysis for a number of priority recommendations. The Mental Health Advisory Council noted the cost-benefit analysis identified the significant impact on quality of life outcomes for the school-based initiatives. There was discussion on the need to early intervention and strong support for school-based initiatives.

Mental Health Advisory Council Work Plan

The Mental Health Advisory Council Work Plan (the Workplan) sets out the topics for consideration at the Council's regular meetings and any specific activities the Council might plan for the year. The Council noted that the Workplan for 2020 required significant change due to the need to consider the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was decided that this year the Council would consider topics related to the areas for action in the PC Report.

The PC Report area for action - prevention and early help for people

- Support for parents and children and navigation support to enable early access

The PC Report area for action - improving people's experiences with mental healthcare

- Complaints mechanisms
- Expanding role of scope of peer work

The PC Report area for action - improving people's experiences with services beyond the health system

- Access to suitable and appropriate housing
- Access to psychosocial support

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