

ACT Mental Health Advisory Council

Public Communique –Meeting of 21 March 2021

The Mental Health Advisory Council (the Council) convened on 21 March 2021. The meeting was chaired by Sue-Ann Polden and the focus of the meeting was on mental health projects across the lifespan.

Children and Young People’s reforms

The Council commends the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing for their work so far on the moderate to severe young persons project. The Council recognises this is an important issue to address and recommends that the Youth Navigation Portal employs a variety of modalities to engage children and young people and does not primarily rely on ‘text’ based information. The Council considered the use of infographics, pictures, videos and even testimonials will be of value as well as very practical information about services such as how to find the building, who you will speak to, what to expect, what to prepare or information to consider/bring prior to your visit.

Older Person’s Mental Health

The Council expressed strong support for progression of the Re-Envisioning Older Person’s Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT Strategy and will add this topic to their 2021 work plan with a full meeting to discuss topic. The Council recommends that any proposed expansion of services also comes with adequate resourcing to support expansion.

Aged Care Reforms

The Council noted the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care. The Council noted the concerns raised by the medical profession about the recommendation to require antipsychotic medication be prescribed by a geriatrician or psychiatrist in residential aged care facilities. The Council considers that the cost of access to private specialists and the existing specialists such as geriatricians and psychiatrists means this recommendation needs significant further consideration.

Adult Mental Health Centres

The Council supported the principles and concepts behind the proposed Adult Mental Health Hubs coming through the Federal Department of Health (as presented by Capital Health Network). The Council considered that engagement with the public as well as private and NGO sectors will be integral to the success of the Hubs.

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