



Australian Government

Department of Health

Communique 27 November 2020

National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Taskforce

On 27 November 2020, the thirteenth meeting of the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Taskforce (the Taskforce) was held by video conference.

The Productivity Commission's Inquiry Report into Mental Health

Mark Roddam, the Commonwealth Department of Health representative, addressed the Taskforce members on the release of the Productivity Commission's Final Inquiry Report into Mental Health (the Report). The Report was released on 16 November 2020 and contains a discussion on the mental health workforce (Chapter 16) and recommendations for the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy.

ACIL Allen provided an overview of the findings of the Report in relation to the work of the Taskforce. The Report is supportive and aligns with the discussions held within the Taskforce and broader stakeholders to date. Members raised the need for the Taskforce to further consider the following:

- Building/growing specific workforces
- Evaluation of evidence-based service/practice
- Identification of service and setting gaps
- The need for further consultation on the recommendations to identify where responsibilities are most appropriate in terms of placements, experience and funding.

Members noted that given the broad depth of mental health and the mental health workforce, it is difficult for any one report or strategy to address all underlying gaps in knowledge and understanding.

Prioritisation of the Working Group Recommendations

ACIL Allen presented an approach for prioritising the working group recommendations. This involved an assessment of the recommendations against five criteria, including:

- Sufficiently formed recommendation to be implementable
- Evidence of need (consistent with evidence-base)
- Existing policy and strategy documents
- Clarity around who is responsible for implementation

- Supports the existing mental health workforce to better meet the needs of consumers and carers.

Assessment against criteria would be indicated by either meeting/not meeting them, rather than the criteria being weighted.

Members were supportive of the approach but had concerns regarding certain workforces not having as robust research or experience behind them compared to larger, more established workforces. ACIL Allen noted that the criteria were preliminary at this stage, with the approach ensuring that recommendations are evidence-based.

Members were advised that ACIL Allen would assess the recommendations based on the criteria and develop a list of prioritised recommendations. This will then be circulated out-of-session for Member feedback and input prior to the next Taskforce meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Taskforce will be held on 11 December 2020.

The meeting will include a discussion on the findings of the Labour Market Analysis and Educational Institutions Review undertaken by the ACIL Allen, and further discussion and finalisation of the prioritised recommendations.

Previous Taskforce meeting communiques are published [here](#).