



Australian Government

Department of Health

Communique 24 April 2020

National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Taskforce

On 24 April 2020, the second meeting of the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Taskforce (the Taskforce) was held. The meeting was held by video conference, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, future meetings will also be held remotely for the foreseeable future.

Priority Areas

Taskforce members endorsed the five priority areas that working groups will examine in more depth. The priority areas are Rural and Remote; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities; Workforce Training and Education; Peer and Lived Experience and Inter-jurisdictional and Inter-governmental.

Taskforce members discussed cross-cutting issues and common themes for the five priority areas: These included:

- skill based competencies
- equity of access to training and education
- career pathways
- organisational readiness to embrace the emerging workforce
- access to mentoring support and supervision
- trauma informed care practice
- telehealth.

Working Groups

The Taskforce noted the operation and expectations of the working groups to be established within the Taskforce. These working groups will:

- be chaired by a member of the Taskforce
- examine the five priority areas in more depth
- develop short, written reports outlining the issues, challenges and models of service across the workforce areas
- consult with mental health stakeholders external to the Taskforce
- have the capacity to conduct meetings outside of usual Taskforce meetings.

Work undertaken by the working groups will help to inform the scope and development of the Strategy.

Working group chairs will meet to discuss terms of reference, key deliverables and timeframes for the working groups. They will also discuss the inclusion of non-taskforce stakeholders as part of the Working Groups.

Future Meetings

Members discussed issues in addition to the priority areas that could be examined in future meetings. These include:

- natural disasters and the needs of the mental health workforce to respond
- workforce requirements to successfully meet the service needs across a stepped care framework
- the practice of trauma informed care
- the impact of funding models on workforce distribution
- mental health workforce competencies in non-standard settings, such as the aged care setting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Taskforce will be held on Friday 8 May 2020 and will involve: discussions on the response to the mental health challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; identifying the stress points in the mental health sector highlighted by the pandemic; and how the mental health workforce can be best supported in the event of future emergencies and natural disasters.

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