6/18/2020

Inquiry into youth mental health in the ACT

MHCC ACT submission

Mental Health Community Coalition ACT

Peak Body in the ACT for the Community Mental Health Sector

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About MHCC ACT

The Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT (MHCC ACT) is a membership-based organisation which was established in 2004 as a peak agency. It provides vital advocacy, representational and capacity building roles for the Not for Profit (NFP) community-managed mental health sector in the ACT. This sector covers the range of nongovernment organisations (NGO) that offer recovery, early intervention, prevention, health promotion and community support services for people with a mental illness. The MHCC ACT vision is to be the voice for quality mental health services shaped by lived experience. Our purpose is to foster the capacity of ACT community managed mental health services to support people to live a meaningful and dignified life.

Our strategic goals are:

- To support providers to deliver quality, sustainable, recovery-oriented services
- To represent our members and provide advice that is valued and respected
- To showcase the role of community managed services in supporting peoples' recovery
- To ensure MHCC ACT is well governed, ethical and has good employment practices.

Preamble

MHCC ACT would like to thank the Standing Committee for the opportunity to make a submission on youth mental health in the ACT. MHCC ACT questions the need for this inquiry at this time. We would like to refer the Committee to a recent, extensive review to hear from young community members in relation to their mental health and wellbeing, commissioned by the Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing. The review was conducted in collaboration with a wide range of community based and government organisations and had input from young people and their carers. The findings, published in December 2019, can be found here. The scope and objectives of the review greatly overlap the objectives of this inquiry.

Recommendations

MHCC ACT supports the recommendations that came out of that review and we encourage the Committee to study its content. The report made three recommendations to improve the support of our young people and their mental wellbeing.

> **Recommendation 1:** Make access to services easier, affordable and increase capacity of current providers
>
> **Recommendation 2:** Increase the awareness and education addressing stigma and fear around mental health
>
> **Recommendation 3:** Need for new services targeting moderate to severe mental illness with 24/7 access

MHCC ACT sees them as a great starting point to improve the mental health support services of children and adolescents in the ACT.

Further MHCC ACT would like to note that Canberra Health Services are planning to commission an Adolescent MH Inpatient Unit as part of the TCH infrastructure program, however this unit is not expected to be operational until 2022. We strongly recommend implementation of the day program and intensive in-home family support program, which are also part of the Model of Care, as soon as possible.

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MHCC ACT