Fact Sheet 1 – What this means for people, families, carers and communities

Key issues

- People with mental ill-health and their families and carers are currently expected to find and navigate services without clear guidance and support. The complexity of this process is a barrier to access.

- The community as a whole needs education to understand available options to manage mental ill-health including how to access information, self-care and self-delivered services, online and telephone supports, and skills for families and communities to support each other.

- About half of all adults with a mental illness begin to develop that illness before the age of 15, so early identification and treatment can make a huge difference.

- People with lived experience, their families and support people need to have greater involvement in decision making and policy development (“nothing about us, without us”).

- There are many examples of innovative and effective strategies to keep people and families contributing in their communities. The key feature of these strategies is that they take a person-centred, whole-of-life approach.

Key responses

- We need to empower and support self-care and implement a new model of person-centred care where the services provided are matched to need, rather than people just having to make do with what funders and services provide.

- This includes promoting easy access to self-help options to help people, their families and communities support themselves and each other, and making it easier to navigate the mental health system.

- We must involve people with lived experience, their families and other support people in decision making and policy development.

- We need to promote the wellbeing and mental health of the Australian community, beginning with a healthy start to life.

- The Commission recommends building positive parenting approaches, resilience and targeted interventions for families from before a child is born and throughout their early years. This should be done both on a population basis and with more intensive, targeted services for those families with emerging behavioural issues, distress and mental health difficulties.

- We need to improve access to services and support through innovative technologies, particularly for young people. We recommend:
- improving emergency access to telephone and internet based forms of crisis support, and linking crisis support services to ongoing forms of information/education, monitoring and clinical interventions; and
- implementing cost-effective e-mental health solutions that build sustained self-help, link to biometric monitoring and provide direct clinical support strategies or enhance the effectiveness of local services.