



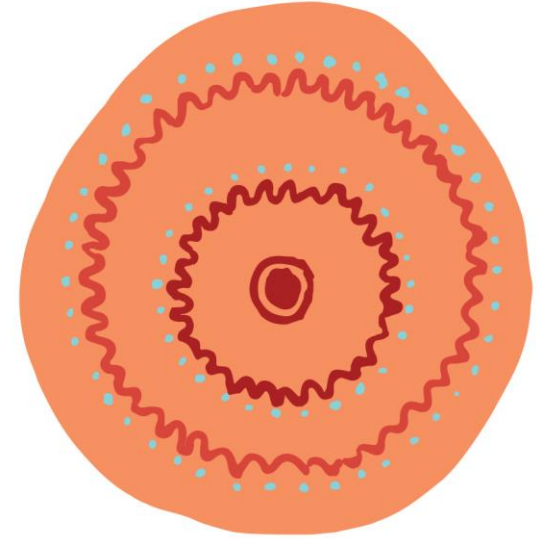
**Australian Government**

**National Mental Health Commission**

**Broken Hill, NSW**

**19 August 2019**

**Making  
Connections  
with your  
Mental Health  
and Wellbeing**



**28 Participants**

This snapshot identifies key points from the  
Town Hall Meeting

Content from all Town Hall Meetings is being  
collated by the Commission

# Exploring Mental Health



Participants were asked to share 3 words that come to mind when thinking of mental health:

- Wellbeing and stigma emerged equally as the dominant responses
- Support and recovery were mentioned frequently
- Loneliness, lack of support, anxiety and distress were also common responses

# Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.

Direct comments included:

- 'Past bad experiences in services'
- 'Lack of understanding of what is really wrong, not relating my thoughts and feelings to mental illness'
- 'Men seeing it as a weakness if they can't cope with life issues'
- 'Don't want to get dobbed in if they are using drugs'
- 'The system is built for severe mental health, not early intervention'
- 'Don't know where to start'
- 'That they might get reported to a Government service, like Child Protection or the Police'
- 'Stigma surrounding mental illness'

# Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.

Discussion points included:

- Lack of finances for treatment, no transport, just too hard to access help
- 'Not recognising that you need help or treatment (don't know what you don't know)'
- Services are not appropriate to our culture, not safe for us as Aboriginal people and not adapted to the way that we see our mental health
- The stigma is very strong – 'women will talk about mental health but men just don't talk about it in this area'
- Mental health issues are seen as being abnormal and people don't want to be judged by others as abnormal
- A lot of diagnoses are couched in negative language and connotations, eg: personality disorder
- There are just not enough services available to cope with the demand

# Big Ideas or Initiatives

Participants were asked for one big idea or initiative to improve mental health in their community.  
Direct comments expanded during discussion included:

- 'Mental health hubs in schools, with self screening'
- 'A social and emotional wellbeing action plan that clearly defines all community roles and responsibilities'
- 'A free safe house for people who are unwell and suicidal – a bus can go pick them up and take them to a safe place and they wake up the next morning to see a new day (all hope is not lost)'
- 'When the river is running, our mental health is better as it is significant to our emotional wellbeing as Aboriginal people, who are natural caretakers of land'
- 'Mental health paid leave'
- 'In schools, not just general education on mental health but how and where to get help, how to get a mental health care plan'
- 'Therapeutic communities – mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation units, and in prisons'

# Big Ideas or Initiatives

Participants were asked for one big idea or initiative to improve mental health in their community.

Discussion points included:

- A cultural or family rehabilitation centre for Broken Hill to assist Aboriginal people to access services and build far more engagement, a centre that is facilitated, run and driven by culture and local perspectives
- Working with the whole family so that when men come back with some rehabilitation, they are not coming back into the same situation that led to their mental health issues
- Peer after hours cafés as a prevention strategy, staffed by peer workers for people who are not acutely unwell to meet, share and support each other when other services are closed
- More awareness and support for the Grow initiative as a service, not just a support group
- Aim for a healthy city not just health workers, by using a whole of community approach including treatment plus businesses helping with a day a week employment as part of the recovery journey
- 'Geographical packages' skilling for paramedics and emergency services

# The Developing Vision

Participants were asked for key aspects to be included in the vision of a new system.

Responses included:

- Recovery as a guiding principle
- Reconnection with self, family and land
- 'My Place'
- Self determination and empowerment
- Togetherness
- Non judgemental
- Mindfulness
- Future
- Holistic
- Collaboration and consistency

# Thank You, Broken Hill

The Commission thanks the community for their comments and suggestions on improving our mental health system

## Ways to stay connected:

- ✓ Attend a Town Hall meeting
- Read the snapshots from your community and other communities in Australia
- Take the survey online (on our website)
- Follow us on Facebook (@NMHCAustralia) and Twitter (@NMHC)
- Join the conversation online using #ConnectingWithYou

[www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au)

