

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES WORKING GROUP

COMMUNIQUE

A summary of the
Mental Health Strategies Working Group Meeting on 22 November 2016

1. FIFO Mental Health Research Steering Committee update

In October 2016, Mental Health Strategies Working Group members requested clarification of the governance and timeframes for the FIFO mental health research.

In November 2016, attendees to the meeting of the FIFO Mental Health Research Steering Committee were advised the Mental Health Commissioner supports the Steering Committee being under the governance of the Mental Health Commission and committed to provide funding for the research, spread over the next two years. Union representatives were not present, and so the research scope, governance and timeline will be confirmed at the December meeting.

The Chair advised the University of Newcastle has been conducting research in the mining sector, looking at the prevalence of mental health issues, interventions, and the effectiveness of interventions. The Working Group will request the University of Newcastle present their research at the next meeting.

2. WA Government mental health programs overview

The Mental Health Strategies Working Group discussed national government mental health programs in which the State Government of Western Australia is involved.

3. FIFO Inquiry Action Plan - Training

Mental Health Strategies Working Group focused on the training and peer support section of the FIFO Inquiry Action Plan.

There are a number of training and peer support programs available to employers, and most Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers also offer training and peer support services. Members agreed there is no need to create new programs. Employers have differing needs, so there should not be any mandatory course content, nor any preferred training/peer support providers.

The focus should be on making it easy for employers to find appropriate training programs for their specific needs. Mentally Health Workplace Alliance (MHWA) is developing criteria to help employers to assess training programs. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA is preparing a summary of resources-specific training objectives for training programs which employers can consider using when exploring training options.

A central repository for mental health information is needed. Members proposed the Mental Health Commission could host that central repository, and a formal request will be made from MIAC. Other organisations which seek to provide information on mental health in a workplace context can then refer to the central repository rather than duplicate information on their own websites.

4. Other Business

The following was discussed under other business.

- The Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee will be disbanded during the State Election caretaker period.

- WorkCover WA is hosting a potentially relevant conference on 3-4 May 2017, to discuss return to work challenges, best practices and initiatives. For details, see: <http://www.returntowork.workcover.wa.gov.au/>
- DMP recently advertised a new inspector position, Inspector of Mines - Mental Health and Wellbeing, whose duties will include developing mental health strategies and guidance material.
- Relationships Australia WA has developed a free online mental health training tool –see <http://www.relationshipswa.org.au/connect>.
- Safe Work Australia WA has a number of mental health videos: <https://seminars.swa.gov.au/search/site/mental%20health>

5. Next meeting: 31 January 2017

The focus of the next meeting will be:

- MHWA's training program assessment criteria
- resources-specific training program objectives
- communication strategies
- identifying relevant codes of practice and guidelines (State and national) related to mental health.

Nicole Roocke

Acting Chair (Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA)

For further information on the Mental Health Strategies Working Group, please email RSDCommittees@dmp.wa.gov.au .