

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION INQUIRY

6 April 2018

Email update to all stakeholders

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Tena koutou katoa, Talofa lava and warm Pacific greetings

You are receiving this email because you or your organisation has expressed an interest in engaging with the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (the Inquiry), or your organisation has been identified as having a potential interest in our work. Please forward this email on to your networks and anyone else who you think may want to find out more information about the Inquiry.

As you may be aware, on 31 January 2018, the Government established an Inquiry into mental health and addiction and we are now well underway. The ultimate goal of the Inquiry is to improve the mental health and addiction outcomes of New Zealanders. The Inquiry is wide ranging: we have been asked to look at how we promote and support good mental health in New Zealand, and the support and services currently in place to respond to the needs of people experiencing mental health and addiction challenges, including people affected by suicide.

We want to provide a clear direction for the future that generates hope and supports communities, providers and government to take action.

This email provides an overall update on where we are at and our next steps.

Our Terms of Reference require us to complete a stocktake of programmes and services in place to promote and support mental health wellbeing, as well as support for those with mental health and addiction challenges. This stocktake will help us understand what is in place, and where the gaps and problems are.

The Inquiry has begun a broad stocktake of existing research, reports, data, and other information that has already been produced in this area. We are also working with a range of government and non-government agencies to better understand the sector and the services and support already in place. We will be going further than government, and wider than just the health sector, as we undertake this stocktake.

Secondly, the Inquiry panel has been giving some thought to how we can engage with interested parties in a way that ensures everyone can have their say.

Listening well to a wide range of communities and stakeholders is important for our Inquiry. The panel members want to hear from everyone, including service users, their families/ whanau, service providers, advocates, sector groups, and experts. We want to hear all ideas – big or small, specific or broad, innovative or building on what's already happening.

To ensure we hear as many perspectives as possible, the panel members have decided that rather than establish small advisory groups, we will instead engage directly and widely with stakeholder groups and attend forums, hui and fono across the country. Panel members are meeting with interested groups and are very keen to hear from other groups and individuals who want to share their thoughts with us. This includes directly reaching out to, and engaging

with Māori, Pacific peoples, young people, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ groups, people living in rural communities, the elderly, veterans, minority, immigrant and refugee populations, victims of violence and people in correctional facilities. To do this well, we seek advice from groups on how they want to be engaged with.

We are in the final stages of preparing a consultation document. This will be very short and focused, and in many formats, including large text and easy read, and in multiple languages. We will support the document with web-based audio recordings and videos featuring sign language. We want it to be as accessible as possible and welcome ideas from people on other ways we can improve accessibility.

We encourage you to share your views in any format you want; written or otherwise. We intend to establish an 0800 line that people can call to share their views, and social media forums will also be available. Schools and other groups will be invited to provide video or pictorial submissions.

We encourage stakeholder groups to hold their own meetings to discuss views and support their members and wider networks to make group or individual submissions.

The consultation document will be released in mid-April, but you don't need to wait until then to share your thoughts. Feel free to email us at mentalhealthinquiry@dia.govt.nz at any time. Information provided via email will be considered and analysed as part of the consultation process. We thank everyone who has already shared information with us.

The panel members will also be travelling around New Zealand for a series of regional meetings to talk to people from a range of backgrounds and views, to hear your ideas for improvements. The dates for these regional meetings will soon be confirmed. We will publish the details on the Inquiry website (www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz). We will also directly communicate these details to all those who have indicated an interest in engaging with the Panel.

We ask everyone with an interest in the Inquiry to record their interest and tell us how you would ideally like us to engage with you. An online form will be available from next week (week starting 9 April 2018) that people can complete (see www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz) or please email (mentalhealthinquiry@dia.govt.nz).

Please also tell everyone you meet about the Inquiry! While we are developing contact-lists, drawing on the advice of many we have engaged with already, we want to be sure we provide all interested people and groups the opportunity to contribute. So encourage people to contact us, or tell us who you think we need to engage with. We would rather go too wide than miss people.

For those of you working on the ground – keep implementing changes – don't wait for us. We look forward to learning about what's happening when we travel the country!

Ma te mahi tahi hei oranga mō tātou

Ron Paterson
Inquiry Chair