

Meeting Update - 26 August 2010

The Rural Mental Health Network met on Thursday 26 August. Network participants that were represented included the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, Wesley Mission, the Uniting Church, Industry and Investment, the Salvation Army as well as many other organisations that work in the field of mental health. Issues that were discussed included:

The Murray Darling Basin Plan;

The Association briefed the Rural Mental Health Network on the potential impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan on social and economic factors affecting rural mental health. The Network was particularly interested in this issue and how it related to regional mental health services, to the extent that following the presentation the meeting voted to issue a media release outlining their concerns. It was also agreed that the Network would create a submission into the review of the Plan once it was released.

Post-Drought Problems

There were discussions regarding mental health issues for farmers post-drought. In many areas of NSW, the physical drought is easing however the emotional and economic pressures still remain. Other factors are coming into play such as financial strains with a full income year yet to be experienced and the other costs such as school fees that now take on added pressures as the physical drought eases.

The current state of the National Health Reforms

It was established that the best course of action at this stage was to wait and see how the outcome of the Federal Election played out and then make contact with the relevant ministers and departments to discuss the National Health Reforms and any details relating to Mental Health issues in rural and remote NSW. It was noted that the current federal election has focused on suicide prevention rather than long term mental health support.

The effectiveness of current Drug and Alcohol Education programs

The Network will provide feedback to the Association on an appropriate speaker to attend the next meeting to discuss Drug and Alcohol education. Current Drug and Alcohol education programs will be researched and their effectiveness analysed to see if they are working effectively.

The current and future developments regarding the Farm-Shed and Men's Shed initiatives

The Network strongly supported both initiatives and agreed to continue supporting them.

Blueprint updates

The Network ran through Blueprint updates from a number of members and then discussed at length the delivery of the Blueprint pathways. The Network will attempt to invite a speaker from the NSW Police Force, Mental Health Intervention Team to talk about the work they do within the police force.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

The Rural Mental Health Network will next meet on 11 November 2010.

