



Australian Government

Australian Digital Health Agency

## Council for Connected Care

*A better-connected healthcare system for all Australians*

### Communiqué

The eighth meeting of the Council for Connected Care (Council) was held in Melbourne on 25 February 2025.

Conjoint Professor Anne Duggan, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and Chair of the Council, welcomed members, noting the addition of new member organisations: Health Information Management Association of Australia, SANE Australia, and the National Mental Health Commission.

Members reviewed the [Quarterly Progress Report](#) for the period October to December 2024 which includes status updates received from the Australian Digital Health Agency, the Department of Health and Aged Care, state and territory health departments, Services Australia, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Healthdirect, and the Australasian Institute of Digital Health.

The February 2025 meeting focussed on the unique needs of people experiencing health disadvantage. Members discussed the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and explored the key barriers and challenges they frequently experience when navigating health challenges and accessing health care services. The Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) spoke about current challenges impacting CALD communities including language and literacy barriers, discrimination and stigma, socioeconomic factors and access to support services. FECCA also provided Council members with an overview of the Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative and its advocacy work to improve the health and wellbeing of Australia's multicultural communities, including research, policy development and the work of the National Multicultural Consumer and Carer Network.

Discussions were also supported by presentations from South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (PHN), National Disability Services, and SANE Australia who each provided an overview of current initiatives underway at their respective organisations:

- *South Western Sydney (PHN)* - presented an overview of digital health applications used to mitigate challenges in accessing quality primary healthcare in an area of widespread socioeconomic disadvantage.



- *National Disability Services (NDS)* - presented solutions currently making a positive impact in the disability sector and discussed the positive impacts of small, supported residential group homes. The NDS also provided an overview of the challenges experienced by people living with a disability when navigating the health system and noted the burden of responsibility on disability care workers to manage complex health conditions, often without the support of digital tools or clinical training.
- *SANE Australia* – highlighted the new Digital Navigation Project which is funded by the Australian Government, led by SANE Australia in collaboration with 16 partner organisations and enhances accessibility of mental health services through digital solutions.

In an interactive breakout session Council members collaborated in small groups to explore the challenges faced by people experiencing health disadvantage when they are navigating the healthcare system and discussed how digital health could help solve these issues, including existing digital health initiatives underway to address these barriers.

A discussion facilitated by Bettina McMahon from Healthdirect, comprised of experts from SANE Australia, the Consumers Health Forum of Australia, FECCA, and Telstra Health, supported the Council to build upon information shared throughout the meeting. Members discussed the importance of trust for consumers and human empathy and how powerful this is in engaging these communities in our healthcare system, including the criticality of culturally appropriate care and the importance of carers' access to health information.

A video showcasing some of the common challenges faced by people experiencing health disadvantaged can be viewed [here](#).

The next meeting of the Council will take place in Alice Springs on 12 June 2025.



# COUNCIL for CONNECTED CARE

people experiencing health disadvantage

25<sup>th</sup> February 2025

PART 1.

## EQUITY

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

ALL AUSTRALIANS DESERVE DECENT HEALTH CARE

FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION



### RELATIONSHIPS ARE WORK

FEEDBACK

BREAKING THROUGH

MAKING SOLUTIONS WORK

TECHNOLOGY IS USEFUL BUT...

WE NEED TO MAINTAIN

PRIORITISE SO THAT CAREERS AND CONSUMERS SEE THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS TRANSFORM INTO REALITY

## Current Initiatives in transitions of care and medication safety

### South-Western Sydney

Low English Speaking area with poor health outcomes

Worse than Kilkunda

KEITH McDONALD

VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES NEED SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS USING DATA EXTRACTION

700 LOCALISED PATHWAYS

300+ FACT SHEETS IN MANY LANGUAGES

LIVE TESTING INTEROPERABILITY

SYSTEM CHALLENGES WORKING TOGETHER

## INTEROPERABILITY OFFERS HUGE OPPORTUNITIES

### Digital Navigation Project

FOCUSSED ON THE EARLY STAGES OF DIGITAL ACCESS

NO DIRECTORIES FOR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

THE TOOL SHOULD BE BUILT BE HEALTH DIRECT

NOT ON ANOTHER FRAGMENTED SYSTEM

TO FIND THE RIGHT PATHWAYS AT THE RIGHT TIME

CATERING FOR DIVERSITY IN AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT

RACHEL GREEN

SANE AUSTRALIA CEO

ALWAYS A NEED FOR AN UPLIFT IN SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SECTOR

### ENGAGE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL TO MAKE IT REAL!

TECH LITERACY CHALLENGES

TECH LITERACY CHALLENGES

THE HUMAN TOUCH

MAINTAIN HUMAN CONTACT

## Navigating Health Challenges

FECCA

AUSTRALIA IS NO LONGER AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRY

MARY ANN BAQUERO

LANGUAGE IS AT THE CORE OF PEOPLE'S HEALTH OUTCOMES

IT'S HARD TO NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM

CONFIDENCE, FEAR, MISTRUST

### TRUST

REGIONAL SUPPORT?

DIGITAL/ON-LINE ACCESS?

IT'S ABOUT HAVING MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO SUPPORT

CREATING SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT

WE NEED TO RALLY MORE STAKEHOLDERS

PARNERING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

THAT ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATION

### National Disability Services

GROUP HOMES

BUSY NOISY LOUD

DEBBIE JAGGERS

WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

SOME RESIDENTS HAVE SEVERE HEALTH ISSUES

### PAST TRAUMA AND TRUST ISSUES

STATE GOVERNMENTS NOT ALWAYS WORKING WELL TOGETHER

WE NEED TO HEAR THEIR VOICES

CHALLENGES AROUND INFO SHARING

### COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES

PARTICULARLY AROUND CHANGE-OF-MEDICATION PLANS

CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

OFTEN YOUNG WORKFORCE

VIOLENCE HAPPENS

MANUAL SYSTEMS

A LOT OF PAPER

DIFFERENT FORMS, DIFFERENT HOUSES, SAME PROVIDER?

### LIVED EXPERIENCE

THE LOOP OF DISPAIR

THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN DESIGNED DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE

FIND ME WHERE I AM

ONE TOOL IN MANY PLACES

TELLING MY TRAUMATIC STORY OVER AND OVER AGAIN

FIND IT YOURSELF!

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE

NOT TARGETED AT MY AGE, CULTURAL HERITAGE, OR STATE OF MIND!

DON'T MAKE ME SEARCH FOR YOU



COUNCIL FOR CONNECTED CARE  
MEETING 25 FEB 2025  
PART 2

Priorities for People experiencing Health Disadvantage  
BREAK OUT GROUPS

IT'S A GOOD SYSTEM BUT THERE'S

CONFUSION  
PERSONALISE COMMUNICATION

CONSENT ISSUES

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES  
THE ABILITY TO PAY FOR SERVICES



NAVIGATION  
COMMUNICATION  
BUILDING CONFIDENCE

FUNDING?

PRIMARY CARE  
HEALTH & SAFETY

WHAT KIND OF INFO DO WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND QUALITY?  
MENTAL HEALTH  
I DON'T LIKE TO ASK ABOUT COST UP FRONT!

STIGMA  
ADDRESSING LITERACY  
TRUST  
REBUILDING TRUST  
DAMAGED BY THE SYSTEM

PRIORITISING AROUND THE INDIVIDUAL  
IMPROVING ACCESS

BE INSTINCTIVE

WHERE CAN WE GET TRACTION, SO WE DON'T HAVE TO BOIL THE OCEAN

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

DISADVANTAGE  
IS ABOUT THE WAY THE SYSTEM IS DESIGNED

Panel Discussion  
actions to address key barriers

People NOT TRUSTED TO TELL THEIR STORY



DON'T MISS EARLY OPPORTUNITIES  
... THEY CAN MAKE A PROFOUND IMPACT  
CHANGING LIVES



WHEN WE KNOW THERE'S DISCRIMINATION IN THE SYSTEM, AS LEADERS, WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

WE COULD LOOK AT CONNECTION THROUGH NON-TRADITIONAL CHANNELS  
CHANNELLING TO BETTER QUALITY AND THE RIGHT SERVICES

- ONE FRONT DOOR
- ONE SHOP FRONT
- ...IT'S NOT HOW PEOPLE WORK

WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID OF HOW COMPLEX DISADVANTAGE IS

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER  
HEALING RELATIONSHIPS



BUILD A SYSTEM AROUND UNDERSTANDING  
TO ACCESS TO NAVIGATE

INFO-SHARING IS NOT ALL BAD. IT CAN BE VALUABLE AND ENGAGING... WE CAN'T HOLD A.I. BACK



EVIDENCE-BASED  
FAMILIES OF CARERS UNSUPPORTED  
UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

ADDRESSING BAKED-IN BIAS

PHYSICIANS TRUSTED MORE THAN THE SYSTEM  
NOT BEING RUSHED CONTRIBUTES TO TRUST



Roundtable Updates

WHEN WE'RE ABLE TO USE OUR LANGUAGE AND BE UNDERSTOOD, WE WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN OTHER THINGS TOO!



Summary

- INSURMOUNTABLE NAVIGATION ISSUES
- TRUST
  - BETTER RESEARCH & INFO SHARING
  - TARGETING COMMUNITY PROVIDERS
  - QUALITY MEASURES
- ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES
- CONTROL SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH OUR OWN ISSUES