

North and West Metropolitan Melbourne Mental Health System Reform

Steering Committee

Staff update – March 2022

Since our last update in September 2021, work continues on planning the implementation of mental health service delivery reforms in north and west metropolitan Melbourne. These service delivery reforms are part of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System proposal to provide a more accessible, responsive, and well-resourced mental health service delivery for Victorians in north and western metropolitan Melbourne, and better align with the entire future mental health and wellbeing system in Victoria.

We welcome these reforms and we greatly appreciate the dedicated and important work all staff undertake to provide mental health services in north and western metropolitan Melbourne, particularly in these challenging times as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 24 February 2022, The Hon James Merlino MP, Minister for Mental Health, endorsed the transition of mental health services in north and west Melbourne.

Here's a summary of what will happen:

- North West Area Mental Health Services (NWAMHS) will separate from the Royal Melbourne Hospital's NorthWestern Mental Health (NWMH) service and be operated by **Northern Health** from mid 2022.
 - These services include: all inpatient, outpatient, and community services, residential aged care facilities, PACER, HOPE services, Research, Prevention and Recovery Centres (PARCs), and Community Care Units.
 - The Aged Persons Mental Health Program will transition later in 2022 to allow for further planning on the service delivery model.
- Northern Area Mental Health Service (NAMHS) will separate from NorthWestern Mental Health and be operated by **Northern Health** from mid 2022.
 - These services include: all inpatient, outpatient, and community services, aged person services, PARCs, and Community Care Units.
 - The Aged Persons Mental Health Program will transition later in 2022 to allow for further planning on the service delivery model.
- Mid West Area Mental Health Services (MWAMHS) will separate from the Royal Melbourne Hospital's NorthWestern Mental Health and be operated by **Western Health** by mid 2023.

- These services include: all inpatient, outpatient, and community services, the women's PARC service, aged person services, Adult Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit, PARC, and Community Care Units.
- **Orygen** mental health services will separate from the Royal Melbourne Hospital's NorthWestern Mental Health once its designation is in place- and we will keep you up to date about the timelines.
 - These services include: the Orygen Specialist Programs and community services, youth forensic beds and forensic youth services, youth Hospital in the Home beds, Youth PARC, the Youth Assessment Team, HOPE service, refugee access service, the Community Development Team, and the Orygen Statewide Clinical Training and Workforce team.
 - Orygen is committed to becoming a signatory to the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and maintaining people's pay and entitlements
- **Mercy Mental Health** will retain and continue to operate all of its existing services with associated activity targets and resources, until mid-2023. Mercy Mental Health's services will then be delivered within the new area of Hobsons Bay and Wyndham. At the point of transition Western Health will assume responsibility for inpatient, outpatient, and community services in the Maribyrnong area. Specifically:
 - The Ursula Frayne Centre (located at Footscray Hospital), will separate from Mercy Health and be operated by Western Health
 - Western Health will be responsible for delivering Emergency Mental Health Services and Psychiatry Consultation Liaison Services at Footscray Hospital, and for community-based care (for persons aged over 25) across the Maribyrnong area. Western Health and Mercy Health will collaborate on an appropriate transition plan to support staff and clients of these services in the lead up to the change.
- **Royal Children's Hospital** will commence discussions shortly with Orygen and Department of Health to determine an agreed date for transition to the 0-11 and 12-25 year old streams and privileging high quality and consumer-centred care transitions.
- It is acknowledged that the Royal Melbourne Hospital and NorthWestern Mental Health will be required to continue to provide some shared services, infrastructure and functional support to Northern Health, Western Health and Orygen in the initial and medium term. Specific services will include workforce development and planning; triage and bed management.

These changes require some changes to legislation. Northern Health, Western Health, and Orygen must become *designated mental health services* under the *Mental Health Act 2014*, or under the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act which is currently being written. This designation must happen before services can transition and become operational. The Department of Health is working to get these legislative changes made in the timelines above.

We as your chief executives are members of the North and West Metropolitan Mental Health Reform Steering Committee, and we continue to meet to oversee the project. In February 2022, we have set up working groups made up of health services staff. These groups will work through the detail of how services and staff will move from one health service to another. We anticipate that these groups will meet frequently for the remainder of 2022 as the transition plans are developed and implemented.

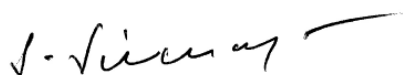
Each health service will be expanding, and each health service has been provided funding to support this expansion. It's important to note there will be no job losses in any of the services and for many staff their employment will not change. Some staff will transition to work in another health service and will be supported in this transition - which may be a new and welcome opportunity. The Victorian Government is

investing in programs and services across North and West Metropolitan Melbourne to substantially boost its diverse, skilled and passionate workforce.

Please speak to your manager, and make sure you access your organisations Employee Assistance Programs in times of need. Your health service will keep you informed about the changes and provide the details you need as plans are finalised on how the changes will affect you and the work you do.

Thank you for your support and understanding of the need for these important changes, and for the mental health care and services you provide vulnerable Victorians. We look forward to working with you and will keep you up to date.

Signatories



Siva Sivarajah
CEO, Northern Health



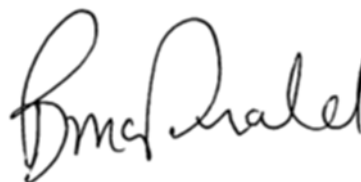
Prof Christine Kilpatrick AO
CEO, Royal Melbourne Hospital



Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen
Group CEO, Mercy Health



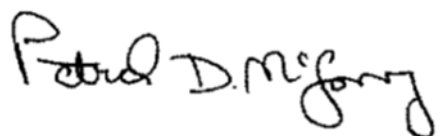
Adjunct Professor Russell Harrison
CEO, Western Health



Bernadette McDonald
CEO, Royal Children's Hospital



Adam Horsburgh
CEO, Austin Health



Prof Patrick McGorry
Executive Director, Orygen