

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WA MENTAL HEALTH COVID-19 RESEARCH
PANEL, HELD VIA ZOOM ON 19 MAY 2020**

PRESENT:

Professor Sean Hood (The University of Western Australia) Chair
Professor Rosa Alati (Curtin University)
Dr Travis Cruickshank (Edith Cowan University)
Dr Ali Fardinpour (Wise Realities)
Dr Salam Hussain (The University of Western Australia/Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital)
Ms Rolee Kumar (The University of Western Australia)
Dr Judy MacCallum (Murdoch University)
A/Professor Caroline Mansfield (Notre Dame University)
A/Professor Dorit Maor (Murdoch University)
Professor Peter McEvoy (Curtin University)
A/Professor Kristin Naragon-Gainey (The University of Western Australia)
Professor Andrew Page (The University of Western Australia)
Professor Christopher Reid (Curtin University)
Dr Ajay Velayudhan (Fiona Stanley Hospital)
Ms Jo Wilkie (The University of Western Australia)
Professor Anna Waterreus (The University of Western Australia)

Executive Officer (Leanne Hall)

APOLOGIES:

Dr Danielle Bartlett (Edith Cowan University)
Dr Elizabeth Newnham (Curtin University)

Previous minutes: accepted

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members, and introduced new member A/Professor Kristin Naragon-Gainey.

2. WADOH ANNOUNCEMENT OF \$6M FOR COVID RESEARCH & INNOVATION

<https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/pages/mcgowan/2020/05/coming-together-to-make-covid-19-research-a-priority.aspx>

3 WAMH-CORP RESEARCH PROJECTS – HOW TO COLLABORATE AND STRENGTHEN THESE FOR FUTURE SUBMISSIONS

Ms Wilkie suggested that one step the group needs to be undertaking, in parallel to the project, is communicating with the audiences about the information that the group is working on, i.e.: the people who are going to use the knowledge (industry, government agencies, service delivery, community organisations and so forth), so they can think about how it will impact on their current planning. As an example, the WA Council of Social Services which is working on how COVID-19 is impacting community at psycho-social level, recently held a breakfast with community leaders, heads of government agencies, corporates, philanthropists etc, and as a result, gained extra funding that covered the shortfall of the Lotterywest funding they recently received.

Advised that any communication should to be issued by Professor Geelhoed as the Executive Director of WAHTN. Also recommend a strong plan of action. Ms Wilkie offered to work with the group to assist with creating a strategy, and advising on people that would be important to approach.

Professor Page provided an update on a recent meeting he had with Dr Ron Edwards, the Mental Health Commissioner, Ms Jennifer McGrath, and a number of MHC staff to discuss the WAMH-CoRP group's activities, and if there were any questions they would like answered with which the group could assist. Received a positive and encouraging, response, and the MHC will provide feedback with specifics to formulate the questions they would like addressed. They are particularly interested in indigenous health (and the work of Professor Helen Milroy and Professor Pat Dudgeon), and older adults. Youth and youth mental health is already well looked after, so they are looking to other areas. They would also like to bring together current data with people who have the expertise to analyse the data, and provide evidence for public health policy. Professor Page commented it would be very useful to get more input from Ms Wilkie, including how to approach the various stakeholders.

4 CAPABILITY STATEMENT – WORKING GROUPS/RESEARCH STREAMS

Professor Hood shared with members the capability statement prepared by Ms Dench.

5. DIRECTORY OF MEASURES

Professor McEvoy reported that he has been refining the measures and research questions for the working groups, and aligning these with CIVIC. Have introduced an option for people discontinue if they do not want to progress through the different sets of measures.

A decision was made to have three different subsets of questions for the target groups; healthcare & medical, education & training, and students. Hoping to finalise the Baseline and Week 2 measures within the next week.

In light of the feedback from Professor Page, is there interest in adding Indigenous and Older Adult working groups?

6. WORKGROUP UPDATES

a. CIVIC

Professor Reid advised the CIVIC group has largely been working on the FIFO program (via DETECT and CIVIC) with Mineral Resources and the Mining Council.

Also meet with the Workforce Workgroup to discuss using CIVIC.

Introduced Ms Jo Wilkie from WAHTN. Ms Wilkie is focusing on promoting activities of the mental health working group.

b. Digital Telehealth

Dr Cruickshank advised there is a group interested in exploring the potential of digital health during COVID-19. There is significant interest from Professor Rob Newton, who is developing a digital health proposal (telehealth or digital health platform) to the WA State Government and philanthropists, not just for COVID-19 but also post-pandemic.

Dr Cruickshank's group is interested from a neurological perspective. They already have the beginnings of a platform idea, however, it hasn't progressed as they need consumer working groups on board. Professor Newton is speaking with the Cancer Council, and Dr Cruickshank's group have also approached MSWA, Parkinson's WA, Huntington's WA, Neurological Council WA and Brightwater. All are onboard, but the project needs more momentum. Will found out more from Professor Newton later today.

Dr Fardinpour mentioned that there was a recent discussion on whether the working group should focus just on COVID-19, or to continue beyond the pandemic. Digital Health has been neglected in WA and needs more people to be involved. This group would be a good place to start.

c. Workforce

Dr MacCallum reported that she has contacted Professor Donna Cross about the TKI DETECT study. 80 schools are involved (government schools only) with measures for students' around physical activity, wellbeing & other health impacts, and similar matching measures for staff and parents. They are only surveying small groups (total of 150 for each school, but only 10-15% at each time point) and for a short time frame (not longitudinal). Professor Cross indicated she is happy to send through further information shortly, but at this stage they are still waiting on ethics approval. Professor Cross has expressed an interest in collaborating with the WAMH-CoRP Workforce Subgroup if similar measures are being used in the other sectors (i.e.: AISWA and Catholic Education).

A meeting between Dr MacCallum, Professor Reid, Professor McEvoy, Dr Cruickshank, Professor Alati, Ms Critchley and Dr Affandi was held last Thursday to discuss whether to persevere with schools, or just focus on the tertiary sector in the first instance. Professor McEvoy has put together some suggested measures, and is working on how to use CIVIC to create different pathways for different target groups. Dr Cruickshank's group had some questionnaires for tertiary students ready to go, and these are being incorporated. Dr MacCallum is finding out whether Murdoch University is happy to participate, as there is some concern about direct contact of students and staff, and not being perceived as 'from' the University (needs to be independent).

Professor Hood mentioned that Professor Bruce Robinson, founder of The Fathering Project, has expressed an interest in allying with the group. Professor Hood will invite Professor Robinson to the next meeting to speak further.

7. PROJECT UPDATES

a. Severe Mental Illness

Professor Waterreus reported that the group has put together a draft to look at surveying mental health staff working in the community (older adults), to assess what changes have been made because of COVID-19, and what they would like to see continue with their practice. Professor Waters is discussing with NMHS to gauge their interest in progressing. Professor McEvoy suggested aligning with Dr Newnam's work targeting health worker staff at Fiona Stanley, Royal Perth, Sir Charles Gairdner and King Edward Memorial Hospitals. CIVIC could also disseminate to WA Country Health Service.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Dr Fardinpour informed the group that their Lotterywest grant for buying new headsets for The Feel Better community program was successful. Additionally an American company donated a UVC machine for cleaning the headsets. If anyone in the group is interested in working together on how digital technology can help with mental health improvement, please contact Dr Fardinpour directly.

NEXT MEETING

2nd June @ 8.30am