

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WA MENTAL HEALTH COVID-19 RESEARCH  
PANEL, HELD VIA ZOOM ON 2 JUNE 2020**

**ZOOM Link:**

<https://uwa.zoom.us/j/559040219?pwd=bJlqenFtTEJNNlhNcmRGejVqNVY0dz09>

Password: 768197

**Or use this link to the same room:**

<http://rebrand.ly/wamhcorp>

**PRESENT:**

Professor Sean Hood (The University of Western Australia) Chair  
A/Professor Shelley Beatty (Edith Cowan University)  
Professor Romola Bucks (The University of Western Australia)  
Dr Travis Cruickshank (Edith Cowan University)  
Ms Evenda Dench (The University of Western Australia)  
Caitlin Fox-Harding (Edith Cowan University)  
Dr Salam Hussain (The University of Western Australia/Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital)  
Professor Peter McEvoy (Curtin University)  
Dr Judy MacCallum (Murdoch University)  
A/Professor Nahal Mavaddat (The University of Western Australia)  
Professor Vera Morgan (University of Western Australia)  
Dr Elizabeth Newnham (Curtin University)  
Professor Andrew Page (The University of Western Australia)  
Professor Christopher Reid (Curtin University)  
Professor Anna Waterreus (The University of Western Australia)

Executive Officer (Leanne Hall)

**APOLOGIES:**

A/Professor Kristin Naragon-Gainey (The University of Western Australia)  
Dr Michelle Olaithe (The University of Western Australia)

Previous minutes: accepted

**1. WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and introduced new member Professor Romola Bucks.

**2. COVID RESEARCH RESPONSE**

Professor Hood alerted members to an email from Professor Toby Richards regarding the COVID-19 Research Response Platform he has been setting up, with the aim to collect bio-samples and patient data. If anyone from the WAMH-CoRP group has any projects that can interface with the CRR please contact Professor Richards.

**3. MRFF COVID MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

Professor Hood advised members that the NHMRC recently announced a Medical Research Future Fund – Coronavirus Research Response 2020 COVID-19 Mental Health Research Grant Opportunity. Closing date is the 13 July (min data in Sapphire 1 July)

<https://www.grants.gov.au/?event=public.GO.show&GOUUID=A25B83FA-06E4-20E4-E4565F9DED9DE54B>

Value: max amount for a single grant is \$1 million, up to \$3M available in 2020-21  
Maximum grant period: 18 months

Objective: to support research to understand how the mental health system can be enhanced to be most effective and responsive during and following the acute COVID-19 crisis. This may include consolidating data systems, helping to design and deliver new treatments, new services, and new policies both during and beyond the crisis.

Outcome: to positively impact the lives of a significant number of Australians, especially those with pre-existing mental health issues and those with mental health issues arising from the COVID-19 crisis. The outcome of the research is also expected to have application beyond COVID-19 and extend to other natural disasters and widespread times of hardship.

Group to meet again next week to discuss a potential application.

### **3. DIRECTORY OF MEASURES**

Professor McEvoy advised that the CIVIC amendments are ready to be submitted to ethics. There are four versions – general, tertiary students, tertiary students and healthcare workers, with a digital health subgroup. Have also introduced a mid-point in the survey where participants can opt to continue or not.

Also querying the need to administer measures fortnightly as originally planned. Perhaps more appropriate to move to a monthly interval up to 3 months, and then 3 monthly up to 12 months.

Dr MacCallum queried whether it was possible to add additional investigators to the CIVIC ethics amendments, and if so, for those investigators to apply for reciprocal ethics through own University ethics. If any member would like their name added, please advise Leanne Hall.

### **4. WORKGROUP UPDATES**

#### **a. CIVIC**

Professor Reid advised that Rhiannon Hulse, a post-doctoral researcher with a background in Public Health, will be working with CIVIC 3 days/week assisting with the mental health program, in particular focusing on the healthcare and education streams. Rhiannon should also be available to help with the preparation of a submission to the MRFF grant.

With regards to CIVIC, over 300 responses have been received to date. Have linked-in with a number of DETECT screening programs, and contacted the Chief Medical Officer and Assistant Director General of Health to request that a CIVIC brochure be handed to people at the time of screening. No response has been received as yet. Professor Hood has a meeting with the ADG, Dr James Williamson, this Friday, so will follow-up this request.

FIFO work is continuing with the mineral resources group, and a new group commenced last week with Rio Tinto “Safe CBD” asymptomatic screening.

Also working with Dr Dominic Mallon (an immunologist with PathWest) on a longer term program of detecting cases in the community, and discussing how CIVIC can link-in.

## **b. Digital Telehealth**

Dr Cruickshank reported that a group including Professor Fiona Wood, Professor Rob Newton, Professor David Playford and others has been in discussion with Ernst & Young to conduct focus group sessions. They have also contacted Telstra, Microsoft and others to establish a digital healthcare platform for Western Australia. Further updates to come.

## **c. Workforce**

Dr MacCallum thanked those who provided advice on questions, and advised that Professor McEvoy has been entering these into the four different surveys (education, healthcare, general & tertiary students).

Have devised a number of common questions, with a few specific for each group, so there will be good possibilities for comparison between the groups. Have also embedded in education the possibility for school teachers to be able to complete.

The next step will be to gain reciprocal ethics approvals at each of the four Universities, and permissions from universities and hospitals to send out invitations to participate.

Dr Cruickshank updated on the proposal of indigenous representation in CIVIC. The main concern is the time it takes to get through ethics (typically 1 year). Digital format is also an issue (lack of access). Further follow-up meetings are needed to ascertain if there is any scope to include indigenous populations in the CIVIC survey.

Dr Newnham commented that the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service is already doing some work in this area, and that it may be worth looking at collaborating rather than starting something new.

## **5. PROJECT UPDATES**

Nil.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

Dr Newnham mentioned that her group has been working on the WHO Technical Report for Home Care during COVID, and a Comment was published in The Lancet (attached). There may be a possibility of a funding round later in the year.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June @ 8.30am

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