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Mental Health Australia to search for a new CEO

Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan has today announced he has been appointed as the Federation Executive Director of Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS), and after eight years in the role, this World Mental Health Day will be his last as CEO of Mental Health Australia.

Mental Health Australia Chair Robyn Kruk AO, said the announcement comes at a time when the wider mental health sector is well placed to advocate for lasting reform, and has never been more united.

“On a personal note, of course we are disappointed to see Frank go, and we wish him well in his new role with the RFDS,” said Ms Kruk.

“Frank has been a consistent and collegiate force in mental health advocacy for nearly a decade, and on behalf of the Board, our staff and the wider sector, I would like to thank him for his outstanding contribution and commitment.”

“Commitment that has helped shape psychosocial supports in the NDIS, helped to strengthen Mental Health Australia’s role as an advocate for reform, helped to transform Primary Health Networks, and most recently helped unite and prepare our sector ahead of the release of the Productivity Commission Inquiry Draft Report into Mental Health.”

“To have more than 90 signatories on our Joint Letter to the Prime Minister and Charter 2020: Time To Fix Mental Health, is a testament to just how united our sector is, and how ready we all are for real and lasting reform.”

Frank Quinlan first joined Mental Health Australia as CEO in 2011 and on making today’s announcement said the hardest decision of all was to leave an organisation, and more specifically the people, that has been such a huge part of his life for the last eight and a half years.

“This new role with the Royal Flying Doctors presents an opportunity to advocate for rural and remote Australians, and to seek better health outcomes for people living in the bush. Those who know me well also know the role combines some of my greatest interests – aviation and rural and remote Australia,” said Mr Quinlan.

“Personally, it will be difficult to leave Mental Health Australia, and that’s mainly because of the great people I’ve worked with over the years, the people who have helped ensure we as a sector are united and ready to capitalise on the once in a generation opportunity that is the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health.”

“To my Deputy, Melanie Cantwell, thank you for your acumen, your expertise, but most importantly your constant support in helping me and the organisation thrive over the last decade or more. I am pleased to leave Mental Health Australia in a strong financial position and ready to face its future with enthusiasm.”



“To the staff, the Board, and our member organisations thank you also for your commitment to our advocacy efforts and our greater vision of mentally healthy people and mentally healthy communities.”

“Of course, in joining the RFDS I will now represent a member of Mental Health Australia, and I look forward to staying involved in mental health policy and advocacy. I am pleased to say this is not unfamiliar ground, and we worked successfully together to secure additional services for regional and remote Australians over recent years. Like all of us, I look forward to how the Productivity Commission Inquiry has the potential to advance mental health reform nationally.”

Mental Health Australia will advertise its recruitment strategy for the vacant CEO position in the coming weeks, while long-serving Deputy CEO Melanie Cantwell will act in the CEO role from Monday 14 October, a role she has undertaken previously.

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Media Contact: Lach Searle – 0488 076 088

