



Information Sheet

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

This information sheet is to assist Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders attending a Mental Health Review Tribunal (Tribunal) hearing. The information is for you, your family and your support network.

What is the Tribunal and what do they do?

The Tribunal is an independent decision-making body whose main role is to hold a hearing to review your Treatment Authority (TA), Forensic Order (FO) or Treatment Support Order (TSO) and determine if they should continue or not. The Tribunal also hear applications for Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT).

At the hearing there are usually three Tribunal members, a legal member, a medical member and a community member (a person who is not a lawyer or a doctor but has the necessary skills and experience in exercising the Tribunal's jurisdiction). However, in some cases there may be between one and five members on a panel.

How will I know when my Tribunal hearing is?

The Tribunal will provide you with a written notice advising when and where your hearing will be held. Hearings are generally held at your local mental health service or at an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community venue. Your hearing may be held in person, via the telephone or via videoconference facilities.

Will I get an Indigenous member at my Tribunal hearing?

Where possible, an Indigenous member will be arranged to be a part of the Tribunal panel hearing your matter. Contact the Tribunal office if you would like to specifically request an Indigenous member at your hearing.

Do I need to go to a Tribunal hearing?

If possible, the Tribunal would like you to be at the hearing to hear your views. If you or someone on your behalf tell the Tribunal that an interpreter is needed before the hearing, the Tribunal will make arrangements at no cost to you.

Can I have support at my hearing?

Yes, you can be supported at your Tribunal hearing. You may have a member of your support network go to the hearing with you. With the Tribunal's permission, more than one member of your support network can attend. If you would like, your nominated support person, a lawyer or another person may also represent you and speak on your behalf. In certain circumstances, the Tribunal will appoint a lawyer for you at no cost to you. If this occurs the lawyer will contact you directly.

What happens before the hearing?

The Tribunal's notice of hearing will include a 'self-report' form. You may wish to complete this form prior to the hearing to help you express your views to the Tribunal. You may also wish to have a yarn with your nominated support person/s or other people in your support network about attending the hearing with you. You may also like to organise legal representation, although this is not required. At least 7 days before the hearing, your treating team will also give you a copy of a clinical report which will be discussed at the hearing. You should take the time to read this report, and if you have any questions about the report, you can have a yarn to your treating team (eg your case manager or doctor).



What happens at a hearing?

The Tribunal may ask you questions. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and give your opinion about your Authority or Order. A member/s of your treating team will also attend the hearing and they will be asked to give their opinion about your illness and your progress/recovery.

What decisions can the Tribunal make?

After reading the clinical report and hearing all the information from you and your treating team, the Tribunal will make a decision whether to confirm (continue) or revoke (stop) your TA, FO or TSO. The Tribunal may also make orders about what category your TA, FO, and TSO should be (inpatient or community), whether you should have limited community treatment (leave from the hospital) or any other orders the Tribunal considers appropriate.

For ECT applications, after reviewing the application and listening to the information at the hearing, the Tribunal will make a decision whether to approve or refuse the application. For further information about ECT have a look at the Tribunal's website at www.mhrt.qld.gov.au.

After the hearing

In most cases, the Tribunal will tell you what their decision is at the hearing. In all cases, you will receive a written notice advising of the Tribunal's decision.

If you would like to know the reasons for the Tribunal's decision, you can request a written statement of reasons. Details of how to request reasons are on the back of the notice of decision or you can contact the Tribunal for further information (details below). You may also wish to appeal the Tribunal's decision to the Mental Health Court. Further information regarding appeals can be obtained by contacting the Court Registry (details below).

What information is there for my support network?

Your support network can attend the Yarning Sessions Program. It is an informal gathering for support people to gain knowledge of the Tribunal, and actions they can take to assist a patient. It brings together support people that have similar experiences to learn about the Tribunal and have a yarn.

To attend a Yarning Session, please contact the Tribunal's Indigenous Liaison Officer on the telephone number listed below.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information about your medication and treatment, you should have a yarn with your treating team. If you need further information about your hearing, you can talk to your health worker or your doctor or contact the Tribunal's Indigenous Liaison Officer on:

Ph.: 07 3338 8300 or Freecall: 1800 006 478 (1800 00 MHRT)

Web: www.mhrt.qld.gov.au

Email: enquiry@mhrt.qld.gov.au.

Further information regarding **your rights** as a patient can be found at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/clinical-staff/mental-health/act/topics/patient-rights>

If you would like further information about **appeals**, the Mental Health Court Registry can be contacted on telephone 07 3082 0554, email RegistrarMHC@health.qld.gov.au or at <http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/courts/mental-health-court>