



Tasmania



29 JUL 2005

PREMIER

15 JUL 2005

Senator Lyn Allison
Chair
Australian Senate
Select Committee on Mental Health
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Allison

Thank you for your letter of the 30 March 2005 seeking submissions to the Senate Select Committee's Inquiry on Mental Health.

The attached Tasmanian Government Submission provides the Inquiry with an overview of the Tasmanian Government's approach to providing mental health services and the key initiatives currently being implemented to improve mental health outcomes in the State.

I look forward to the release of the Select Committee's draft report and would appreciate the opportunity for the Tasmanian Government to provide additional comment at that time.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lennon
Premier

Tasmanian Government Submission

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Health***

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Senate Select Inquiry on Mental Health with information regarding the provision of mental health services in Tasmania. The paper will highlight recent reviews conducted by the Tasmanian Government in this area and will outline key initiatives aimed at improving the quality and comprehensive coverage of mental health services in the State.

The Tasmanian Mental Health Service is located within the Division of Community, Population and Rural Health of the Department of Health and Human Services. It is responsible for developing, managing and coordinating Tasmanian Health Department policy as it relates to the provision of mental health services.

Tasmania's mental health services continue to be in a period of transition. This is due to the closure of the Royal Derwent Hospital, the State's largest institutional provider of mental health care in 2000, and the redirection of resources to community-based care. As a result, community services have been in a period of rapid evolution and development.

The Tasmanian Government has been clear that Tasmanians with mental illnesses are entitled to expect high quality, professional mental health care in a safe environment. This is in line with *Tasmania Together*, Tasmania's community-driven 20 year plan for the State, which includes a number of related goals and benchmarks in the areas of poverty, community, healthy lifestyles, community safety, and health services.

To achieve its objectives in relation to mental health services, the Tasmanian Government, through the Department of Health and Human Services and in some cases, through cross-agency collaboration, has been proactively addressing issues across the continuum of mental health services, including child and adolescent, adult aged care, and forensic. Initiatives taken in these areas include providing additional resources, reducing service gaps, legislative amendments and, importantly, cultural change and service reform.

Over the past five financial years, Mental Health Services has received a steady increase in its base funding. Funding rose over \$11 million in that period.

2. Setting Directions for Mental Health Services Reform

2004 was a significant year for Mental Health Services as it signalled the importance of mental health in the Government's health priorities. Mental Health Services received a further increase with the announcement of the Bridging the Gap funding package of \$47 million over four years commencing 2004/05.

Bridging the Gap Package

Bridging the Gap was initiated in April 2004 when the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Human Services, requested a state-wide review of the Department's Mental Health Services and its interactions with other stakeholders. The review was directed by the following terms of reference:

1. To review quality systems and clinical risk/system issues that require prioritised attention.
2. To review and identify operational and infrastructure issues that impact on service delivery.
3. To review and identify workforce priorities and issues in Tasmanian Mental Health Services.
4. To review and identify any strategic planning and legislation issues.
5. To consider recent relevant reports pertaining to Tasmanian Mental Health Services.

The Review was conducted by a Review Team supported by a Reference Group that represented consumers of mental health services, families, non-government organisations (NGOs) and the primary health care sector.

The Review took into account a number of reviews undertaken in Tasmania in 2004. These included:

- the *Supported Accommodation for People with Mental Illness framework*;
- Anglicare's *Thin Ice Report*
- the preliminary findings from the Health Complaints Commissioner's *Review of Ward 1E in Launceston*
- The Doherty Report - review into Department of Psychiatric Medicine, Royal Hobart Hospital
- the *Review of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services*, initiated by the Department of Premier and Cabinet after the Kids in Mind project reviewed availability of services to this client group.

The outcomes of the Review, completed in September 2004, are set out in the report, "*Bridging the Gap*".¹ A number of key themes, outlined below, became evident during the review process. These key themes subsequently became the Review Team's recommendations to the Government, for progressing service improvement within the State's mental health programs.

The Bridging the Gap Review considered the recent period of transition experienced by Tasmania's Mental Health Services (see introductory remarks) and concluded that these changes have required:

- Significant development in the mix of skills needed for service provision in the community;

¹ *Bridging the Gap* Report is available on <http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/>
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- Rapid development of community mental health teams, and primary care providers including general practitioners;
- A change in the requirements of acute inpatient services to focus on short-term management of episodes of acute mental illness;
- An increased involvement of non-government organisations (NGOs) in supporting people with mental illness residing in the community.

The Bridging the Gap Review set out to broadly define the required range of comprehensive services for Tasmania, and in this context established priorities for the integrated development of additional services. The review made significant recommendations about the development of clinical teams, and NGO sector support services. The recommendations are based on a strong reform program across the sector with significant and targeted investment in core services, in both the public and NGO parts of the sector. The Review confirmed that a contemporary, community-focused model of service delivery needs to be fully realised.

Recommendations from the *Bridging the Gap* Report included:

- **Quality and Safety:** that Tasmanian Mental Health Services establish monitoring and research based activity, which ensures services provided to clients and families are safe, service delivery programs are based on evidence, and documentation standards are met.
- **Specialist Resource Levels:** that, in light of the shortage of staff resources, DHHS adopt the NSW benchmarked levels of community specialist resources for Tasmanian mental health services and achieve these levels over the next five years.
- **Community Based Care** (including supported accommodation): that, to address a scarcity of community-based mental health resources and support services, the Tasmanian Government develop the extent and quality of community-based mental health care, through the following actions:
 - Establish the recommended range of supported accommodation;
 - Define a recovery framework for mental health services in partnership with general practice and NGO providers, and establish a full range of recovery and support programs in each region;
 - Establish and resource forums in each region to create a network of providers, consumers, family and carer representatives;
 - Further develop independent consumer carer and family advocacy services.
- **Ensure Comprehensive Care:** that a Mental Health Strategic Plan is developed to address other service delivery issues. These include:
 - Privacy, consumer and family access to information,
 - The inpatient needs of specific groups such as children and adolescents and older people,
 - Development of shared service arrangements for people with complex needs,
 - The need to undertake a state-wide audit of admission and discharge planning processes;

- Work with Commonwealth agencies especially in relation to aged care and further develop relationships with primary care providers.
- **Workforce Developments:** that DHHS and the Tasmanian Mental Health Services address the range of workforce development needs across the mental health sector .
- **Strategic Planning:** that, to ensure coordinated evolution of Tasmanian Mental Health Services, DHHS:
 - Develop a state-wide strategic plan by March 2005, providing direction and leadership for the mental health sector until 2009.
 - Develop regional consultation forums as part of a provider and stakeholder network in order to facilitate widespread consultation and communication in developing and coordinating sector-wide initiatives.
- **Legislation and Patients' Rights:** that DHHS:
 - Review perceived barriers to effective treatment that result from provisions of the *Mental Health Act 1996*, which allow detention, but not treatment of patients;
 - Review the effects of other legislation on consumers of mental health services, including Public Trustee services to patients under the jurisdiction of the Guardianship Board;
 - Create a statutory role of Chief Psychiatrist.

National Mental Health Strategy

Tasmania is committed to implementing the principles and aims of the National Mental Health Strategy which will result in Tasmanians having ready access to a comprehensive mental health service which is consumer driven, integrated, employs a skilled multidisciplinary workforce, is accountable and responsive to the community's needs and works collaboratively with key stakeholders.

The *Bridging the Gap* Report, current and previous reviews, and the National Mental Health Strategic Plan play a central role in providing direction for sector development.

3. The Tasmanian Government Reform Program

Implementing the recommendations of *Bridging the Gap* Report

In November 2004, the *Bridging the Gap* Report was considered by the Tasmanian Government. The Government confirmed acceptance of the *Bridging the Gap* Report and recommendations, and allocated \$47 million in additional funding over four financial years to implement the reform program.

The funding was the single largest investment in Mental Health Services during its 170-year history and was a strong indication of the Government's commitment to improving services to some of most vulnerable people in Tasmania.

Mental Health Services have been actively progressing the recommendations from the *Bridging the Gap* Report and ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of the State Government's investment and commitment to Tasmania's Mental Health Services.

An implementation plan has been developed and commenced in January 2005. The three main areas of focus are:

- Improving quality and safety of services;
- Developing non government services including supported accommodation services, recovery programs and packages of care for clients living in their own home throughout the state; and
- Strengthening clinical resources in the community with a focus of child and adolescent teams.

Services to be developed over the next four years include:

- 62 packages of care to support clients to live in the community;
- a 12 bed high support community facility in Launceston;
- 12 bed cluster houses for supported accommodation in the South and the North West Coast;
- More than doubling the number of clinical positions in Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (26 FTE staff);
- Increase clinical positions in adult mental health services by over 20% (16FTE positions);
- an additional 6 FTE clinical positions to work with elderly mental health clients;
- \$3.78 million to drive quality and safety improvements, assist with the application of the *Mental Health Act 1996* and develop a mother & baby service;
- Recovery Programs in each region to provide activity, social and vocational skills programs to support consumer recovery; and
- \$4.52 million to upgrade existing mental health and non-government organisations' facilities & services.

Reform of Ward 1E

While the reform agenda has been started across the service sector, the Government has also been ensuring the improvement of acute mental health units. Of particular focus for the Government was the need to improve services at Ward 1E, Launceston General Hospital. Ward 1E had, in recent times, been the subject of complaints made by nurses, an Official Visitor and members of Parliament. In response, a review of the current systems and structures of Ward 1E was undertaken in collaboration with key stakeholders.

In March 2004, the Minister for Health and Human Services, David Llewellyn MHA directed the Health Complaints Commissioner to undertake an investigation into Ward 1E and related matters. This investigation was conducted conjointly with the Nursing Board of Tasmania.

The Government accepted all of the recommendations and has taken immediate steps to implement them in full. Actions taken by the Department to date include:

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- Appointment of a regional Quality and Safety Officer and state-wide Quality and Safety Consultant to promote service improvements;
- Appointment of a Clinical Nurse Specialist on Ward 1E to provide additional leadership and staff education and support;
- Additional medical resources to improve standards of clinical governance;
- Increased training and development opportunities;
- Renovations and installation of equipment at Ward 1E to improve safety and security for staff and patients;
- Review of policies, procedures and practices on Ward 1E, including those relating to seclusion, use of restraint, and complaints; and
- The establishment of a Ward Management Committee chaired by the Regional Area Manager to ensure appropriate clinical governance and management of the unit.

Work has also commenced on the establishment of appropriate standards and tools for improved patient care, including changes to documentation, risk assessments, management plans, discharge planning and management of clients with special needs such as alcohol and substance abuse. Quality improvement initiatives such as improved incident reporting and management and an audit of health care documentation are planned. The Department has also advertised for a regional Clinical Nurse Educator to assist in the education of nursing staff and maintenance of clinical competence.

A taskforce has been established to ensure the recommendations from the Ward 1E review are actively pursued and implemented. The Government has provided a clear mandate to implement the recommendations within a six-month timeframe.

The learnings gained from the taskforce's work will inform and be applied as appropriate across mental health services in Tasmania, to achieve a better balance between acute hospital and community based services, in line with the Bridging the Gap initiative.

Correctional Health and Forensic Mental Health

Concurrently with the mental health service reform, the Government continues to actively progress the development of Correctional Health Services and Forensic Mental Health.

The key agenda items for Forensic Mental Health Services include:

- Over representation of people with a mental illness in the criminal justice system and in custody;
- The extent to which correctional environments give rise to mental illness;
- Adequacy of legislation and processes in protecting their human rights and the use of diversion programs for such people;
- The practice of detention and seclusion within mental health facilities and the extent to which it is compatible with human rights instruments, humane treatment and care standards, and proven practice in promoting engagement and minimizing treatment refusal and coercion; and
- Recruitment of specialist staff in particular forensic experienced Psychiatrists Allied Health Professionals and Mental Health Nurses.

In order to address these key concerns within Correctional Health and Forensic Mental Health, a number of service developments have been undertaken. These include amendments to related legislation, the expansion of community teams and importantly the establishment of the Correctional Health Services Renewal Project.

Correctional Health Service Renewal Project

The Correctional Health Service Renewal Project provides the change management framework for the provision of health services for offenders in the Tasmanian community and the State's correctional services facilities.

The Project has a Steering Committee of senior staff from both the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations.

Outcomes from the Renewal Project are expected to be:

- a focus on quality;
- appropriate models for forensic mental health and primary health care;
- good service governance;
- skilled and professional staff;
- a healthy and safe environment; and
- good working relationships between the two Departments.

The first action by Government in improving health outcomes for prison inmates was the strategic decision to transfer Correctional Health Services from the Department of Justice to the Department of Health and Human Services in July 2001. This decision was to facilitate a unified and health focused service to prisoners and the criminal justice system.

Two projects being managed under the Correctional Health Services Renewal Project are the development of a new stand alone Secure Mental Health Unit, which is currently under construction, and the development of a new Correctional Primary Centre at the new prison, which is scheduled to be completed by July 2006.

Secure Mental Health Unit

In 2001 the Tasmanian Government made a commitment to make significant improvements to health services for prisoners, which included the development of a new stand alone Secure Mental Health Unit.

The Government provided an additional \$5.25 million in 2004/05 for the new Secure Mental Health facility, which will be built as part of the prison redevelopment. There has also been a commitment of \$5.25 million in 2005/06 for this facility.

Construction of the new 35 bed Secure Mental Health Unit is progressing rapidly with practical completion programmed for early November 2005.

The Unit will bring Tasmania in line with national and international best practice mental health services. It will provide a therapeutic environment for people with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system and represents a significant advance in both correctional and mental health services in Tasmania.

It will be located at the existing Risdon Correctional Complex, but geographically separated from the prison. Its location will enable easy and safe transfer of detained people for inpatient care.

The Unit will provide assessment, high quality psychiatric treatment and secure accommodation for up to thirty-five people who require specialist mental health inpatient treatment under relevant legislation.

Patients admitted to this Unit will be:

- persons found not guilty for reasons of insanity;
- persons within the criminal justice system with mental illness and in need of specialist mental health treatment; or
- in exceptional circumstances, persons living in the broader community, aged over 18 years with severe and/or prolonged mental illness resulting in behavioural disturbances which pose a significant risk to themselves or others and have not been managed effectively in a less restrictive setting. This applies to a very small number of people in the community. Any involuntary admission will be monitored and controlled by the Forensic Mental Health Tribunal.

Improved discharge planning procedures will ensure that patients will be well prepared for discharge. New legislation is being drafted that includes the establishment of a Forensic Tribunal to oversee this process. Decisions regarding the discharging of patients will be based on health and risk management grounds, with the final decision body being the Supreme Court of Tasmania. This will ensure that management decisions are quarantined from the political process.

International recruitment agency Drake Australia Pty Ltd, which specialises in the recruitment of psychiatric nursing staff, has been contracted to conduct an extensive national and international recruitment campaign.

In order to facilitate the operation of the Secure Mental health Unit, a suite of legislation requires amendments. After extensive consultation, a number of amendments have been proposed to enable the Unit to operate under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Human Services. Legislation requiring amendments include the *Criminal Justice (Mental Impairment) Act 1999*; *Sentencing Act 1997*; *Mental Health Act 1996*; *Corrections Act 1997*; *Youth Justice Act 1997* and *Guardianship and Administration Act 1995*.

The legislative amendments that will facilitate the operation of the Secure Mental Health Unit will enable the Unit to operate in an effective and orderly manner while ensuring the protection of the human rights of forensic patients.

Community Forensic Mental Health Service

The Community Forensic Mental Health Service manages patients living within the broader community and who have Court imposed treatment orders. These referrals include patients who are not able to be cared for in an Adult Mental Health Facility because of high risk factors.

The Court Liaison Service, through a Court Liaison Officer, provides mental health assessment of people appearing in Court. These practitioners carry the status of

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Authorised Mental Health Practitioners (as defined under the *Mental Health Act 1996*) and carry certain responsibilities outlined in the Act.

If a person's assessment reveals an acute mental illness, they may be admitted to hospital (voluntary or involuntary admission), they may be referred to community mental health teams or they may be remanded in custody with a referral to prison-based mental health services.

Mental Health and Correctional Health Information Management Planning Study

Mental Health Services and Correctional Health Services are undertaking an information planning study to identify the business requirement for an integrated information management system. This system will provide a comprehensive electronic medical record system that will enable clinical staff to access relevant information on clients, plan case management of clients, and evaluate outcomes of clinical services. It is proposed that the information system is established in all Mental Health and Correctional Health Service units. This will enable the services to effectively monitor and manage their clinical services, and provide the evidentiary basis for the evaluation of current and future services. This system will also be utilised to provide all nationally determined information requirements.

4. Concluding Remarks

The Tasmanian Government understands that the improvement of mental health services is not static and that it requires consistent and constant attention to ensure best practice, transparency and accountability.

Tasmania has made significant steps in the right direction by recognising mental health is a priority and not being afraid to tackle hard issues in an open and proactive way.

However this is not to negate the need for a strong partnership between the States, Territories and the Commonwealth Government. A partnership arrangement with the Commonwealth is vitally important for effectively working towards shared responsibility and common goals in tackling mental illness.

There is a need for continuing Commonwealth/State Government engagement in the National Mental Health Services and its initiatives, including the promotion and prevention strategy, information development and suicide prevention.

Any dilution of the partnership will have adverse effects for people with a mental illness.