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Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Attention: Dr Ian Holland, Secretary

Subject: Senate Select Committee on Mental Health - Questions on Notice

I write in response to an email received from your office regarding questions on notice put to me at the public hearing of the Senate Select Committee in Hobart on 1st February 2006.

Question one: Are you able to provide the committee with statistics for Tasmania - the number of forensic patients, the number of those in prisons with a mental illness, and the number of people in the community receiving treatment in one form or another?

Forensic Mental Health Services are not part of the Mental Health Service in Tasmania. The response provided to the Committee below is from Mr John Alderdice, the State Manager, Complex and Specialist Services, who has responsibility for Forensic Mental Health Services in Tasmania.

Part 1 - the number of forensic patients?

There are currently 322 active forensic patients in Tasmania. This figure has been derived by totalling the number of forensic patients parts 2 and 3. It should be noted that these figures can only be considered within the context of Tasmania's interpretation of the questions and provision of data assessed as being either relevant and/or potentially useful. The figures are influenced by Tasmanian legislation, policy and structure pertaining to the Forensic service, current prison service model and mental health services service structure and model.

Part 2 - the number of those in prisons with a mental illness?

There has been no detailed survey of psychiatric morbidity within the Tasmanian prison population. To undertake such a survey would require national agreement on key issues such as methodology

and definition (what is mental illness) in order that the data could stand up to vigorous analysis and be useful for benchmarking against other states.

Given that your question is specifically asking for “the number of prisoners with a mental illness” which as we indicate above is only obtainable through a proper population sample we are not in a position to answer this question at this time.

We have chosen to provide the following information that you may find useful but should only be considered in isolation. A snapshot of current service demand indicates the following:

Number of prisoners currently admitted to an inpatient bed for the purpose of assessment/treatment/care as a result of a diagnosed mental illness – admission to a secure mental health unit. New facility opened now capacity for 35.	12
Average number of prisoners that have received some level of contact or intervention from the psychiatric nurse liaison team - figures include main prison, inpatient's, women's, Hobart Remand Centre, Launceston Remand Centre and Hayes prison farm	230
Number of prisoners the Forensic Allied Health Professional team are in contact with	18

Part 3 - the number of people in the community receiving treatment in one form or another?

The question on Forensic patients in the community is subject to definitional issues. For us it raised questions as to - are we to report on the number of people on supervision orders, the numbers of people who are seen by the Community Forensic Mental Health Services, the number of people who may be involved in the court or community correction services who are seen by any one in the public mental health services, or more broadly the number of people who may be involved in the court or community correction services who are seen by any mental health professional public or private? The answer rises dramatically as you expand the definition.

We are able to advise that Tasmanian Forensic services currently have contact for case management with 62 clients in the general community (outside of the prison services). This figure is drawn from our client review lists for the north and the south including supervision orders, probation orders and some clients on no orders. This figure excludes clients who have contact with the Court Liaison Officers through the courts. The figure doesn't reflect people who have contact with main stream mental health community teams and Doctors for assessments only.

The Adult Community Mental Health Service in Tasmania currently has 3001 active consumers, representing 1.02% of the total adult population of the State. The target for Mental Health Services Strategic Plan 2006 - 2011 is to achieve an active caseload that equates to 3% of the adult population by 2001. This will be done in 0.5% increments annually to 2011. The reasons for the variation between the target and actual number of current consumers are complex and include data collection issues as well as issues such as service accessibility.

Question 2: Is the budget for mental health services within the health services budget going to more closely match the disease burden?

Historically the Tasmania Government spending on mental health service provision has steadily increased against the national average. In 1992 - 93 spending was \$77.19 per capita, \$88.29 in 1997-98, 93.99 in 2002 - 03, and \$95.05 in 2003 - 04. In 2002 - 03 the national average expenditure per capita was \$100.02.

The estimate per capita expenditure for 2005 - 06 in Tasmania is \$122.29. This figure includes additional funding provided by the Tasmanian Government to implement the Bridging the Gap reforms in mental health. A national comparison is not available, however, the Tasmanian expenditure is considerably higher than for previous years.

The increase in expenditure available for mental health service in Tasmania is therefore occurring at a higher rate than the national average, and is more closely matching the disease burden in this state.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Des Graham
State Manager, Mental Health Services

24 March 2006

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