

Dear Parent

Thankyou for meeting with Dr Stathis, Ms Schnitzerling and myself, on the evening of 26 November 2014. I truly appreciate you giving up your time to raise the issues and concerns that the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre (BAC) caused for you and your children. It was an extremely important opportunity for us to gain a better understanding of the challenges you have faced dealing with your children and the challenges your children have faced coping with complex mental health problems.

I understood there were three important actions from our meeting.

The first was a multidisciplinary review of the care arrangements that are now in place for the group of adolescents that transitioned from the BAC. I am aware that a number of the cohort are now successfully placed in care arrangements with support from a range of public, private and non-government providers. I would not seek to disrupt those arrangements. However, for any parent of a young person transitioned from the BAC who is not satisfied with the support they are receiving then the department will facilitate a multidisciplinary review either in the public or private system.

Secondly, I agreed to consider the policy decision that currently prevents young people over the age of 18 years accessing an acute mental health bed for adolescents. An age greater than 18 years is not an absolute barrier to a young person being admitted to a mental health bed for adolescents. It is critical that clinicians make decisions mindful of the young person's developmental achievements and connections to family and education. A number of services are developing to address the needs of young persons in both the public and private sector. You are probably aware that 'headspace' is aimed at 12 to 25 year olds. The two residential services that the department has contracted in Cairns and Greenslopes are both aimed at 16-21 year olds. The Queensland Mental Health Commission released its strategic plan in recent weeks. That plan commits the department to the development of a plan for the delivery of state funded mental health services. That work will be underpinned by a number of foundation documents including the National Mental Health Services Planning Framework and the developing work of the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority that includes a mental health care type and mental health classification. As we deliver our state funded mental health service plan and its implementation it is my intention to:-

1. Ensure that you are engaged and consulted with in that process
2. Ensure the extended treatment needs of adolescents with complex mental health conditions are properly considered.

Thirdly, I agreed to consider the need for a wider range of supports for parents. The department funds a number of non-government organisations to provide carer support. You might be familiar with the work of ARAFMI, ISIS, Stepping Stones, Aftercare or Centrecare. In all of our Hospital and Health Services there are a range of group and individual supports available for parents and other carers. Some parents will have supports in place that are working for them. However, similar to my offer to review the care needs of young persons transitioned from the BAC, I am equally willing to facilitate additional support for any parent that feels they have needs that are not currently being met or cannot be met by the currently funded services in their area and I am happy to have that provided from within either the public or private sector.

Comment [JK]: It is noted that many of the families have refused to access their local CYMHS services which provide the multidisciplinary support they are now requesting.

Comment [JK]: Are we committing to resourcing access to private psychiatry with public funds? [REDACTED]

Comment [JK]: Is this part of a broader carer/ consumer consultation process – if so it may be wise to state this so we don't set up expectations that this parent group will be consulted 'independently' of other consumer/ carer groups.

Comment [JK]: Are the families wanting their own mental health support and wouldn't their GP be the first point of call for them in relation to this? Again is the public sector offering to fund private services for these

Thankyou again for taking the time to meet with me. Thankyou for doing so at short notice and thankyou for sharing your stories with my team and I. I know this has been a very difficult time for many of you and I appreciate your willingness to assist in the design of our future mental health services.

If you have any further questions or if you need the department to facilitate a multidisciplinary review of your child or you would like to find some additional supports for yourself or another family member you should contact the Director of Mental Health, Dr Bill Kingswell [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely