



Proposed Service Model Elements

Adolescent Extended Treatment and Rehabilitation Services (AETRS)

Preamble

Mental health disorders are the most prevalent illnesses affecting adolescents today. Of particular note is the considerable evidence that adolescents with persisting and severe symptomatology are those most likely to carry the greatest burden of illness into adult life. Despite this, funding for adolescent (and child) mental health services is not proportional to the identified need and burden of disease that exists.

In the past 25 years, a growing range of child and youth mental health services have been established by Queensland Health (and other service providers) to address the mental health needs of children and adolescents. These services deliver mental health assessment and treatment interventions across the spectrum of mental illness and need, and as a service continuum, provide care options 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No matter where an adolescent and their family live in Queensland, they are able to access a Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) community clinic or clinician (either via direct access through their Hospital and Health Service, or through telehealth facilities). Day Programs have been established for adolescents in South Brisbane, Toowoomba and Townsville. Acute mental health inpatient units for adolescents are located in North Brisbane, Logan, Robina, South Brisbane and Toowoomba, and soon in Townsville (May/June 2013). A statewide specialist multidisciplinary assessment, and integrated treatment and rehabilitation program (The Barrett Adolescent Centre [BAC]) is currently delivered at The Park Centre for Mental Health (TPCMH) for adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age with severe, persistent mental illness. This service also offers an adolescent Day Program for BAC consumers and non-BAC consumers of West Moreton Hospital and Health Service.

Consistent with state and national mental health reforms, the decentralisation of services, and the reform of TPCMh site to offer only adult forensic and secure mental health services, the BAC is unable to continue operating in its current form at TPCMh. Further to this, the current BAC building has been identified as needing substantial refurbishment. This situation necessitates careful consideration of options for the provision of mental health services for adolescents (and their families/carers) requiring extended treatment and rehabilitation in Queensland. Consequently, an Expert Clinical Reference Group (ECRG) of child and youth mental health clinicians, a consumer representative, a carer representative, and key stakeholders was convened by the Barrett Adolescent Strategy Planning Group to explore and identify alternative service options for this target group.

Between 1 December 2012 and 24 April 2013 the ECRG met regularly to define the target group and their needs, conduct a service gap analysis, consider community and sector feedback, and review a range of contemporary, evidence-based models of care and service types. This included the potential for an expanded range of day programs across Queensland and community mental health service models delivered by non-government and/or private service providers. The ECRG



Barrett Adolescent Strategy

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have considered evidence and data from the field, national and international benchmarks, clinical expertise and experience, and consumer and carer feedback to develop a service model elements document for Adolescent Extended Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Queensland. This elements document *is not a model of service* – it is a conceptual document that delineates the key components of a service continuum type for the identified target group. As a service model elements document, it will not define how the key components will function at a service delivery level, and does not incorporate funding and implementation planning processes.

The service model elements document proposes four tiers of service provision for adolescents requiring extended mental health treatment and rehabilitation:

- **Tier 1** – Public Community Child and Youth Mental Health Services (existing);
- **Tier 2a** – Adolescent Day Program Services (existing + new);
- **Tier 2b** – Adolescent Community Residential Service/s (new); and
- **Tier 3** – Statewide Adolescent Inpatient Extended Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (new).

The final service model elements document produced was cognisant of constraints associated with funding and other resources (e.g., there is no capital funding available to build BAC on another site). The ECRG was also mindful of the current policy context and direction for mental health services as informed by the National Mental Health Policy (2008) which articulates that *'non acute bed-based services should be community based wherever possible'*. A key principle for child and youth mental health services, which is supported by all members of the ECRG, is that young people are treated in the least restrictive environment possible, and one which recognises the need for safety and cultural sensitivity, with the minimum possible disruption to family, educational, social and community networks.

The ECRG comprised of consumer and carer representatives, and distinguished child and youth mental health clinicians across Queensland and New South Wales who were nominated by their peers as leaders in the field. The ECRG would like to acknowledge and draw attention to the input of the consumer and carer representatives. They highlighted the essential role that a service such as BAC plays in recovery and rehabilitation, and the staff skill and expertise that is inherent to this particular service type. While there was also validation of other CYMHS service types, including community mental health clinics, day programs and acute inpatient units, it was strongly articulated that these other service types are not as effective in providing safe, medium-term extended care and rehabilitation to the target group focussed on here. It is understood that BAC cannot continue in its current form at TPCMH. However, it is the view of the ECRG that like the Community Care Units within the adult mental health service stream, a design-specific and clinically staffed bed-based service is essential for adolescents who require medium-term extended care and rehabilitation. This type of care and rehabilitation program is considered life-saving for young people, and is available currently in both Queensland and New South Wales (e.g., The Walker Unit).

The service model elements document (attached) has been proposed by the ECRG as a way forward for adolescent extended treatment and rehabilitation services in Queensland.



There are seven key messages and associated recommendations from the ECRG that need to underpin the reading of the document:

1. Broader consultation and formal planning processes are essential in guiding the next steps required for service development, acknowledging that services need to align with the National Mental Health Service Planning Framework

- The proposed service model elements document is a conceptual document, not a model of service. Formal consultation and planning processes have not been completed as part of the ECRG course of action.
- In this concept proposal, Tier 2 maps to the Clinical Services Capability Framework for Public and Licensed Private Health Facilities Version 3.1 (CSCF) Level 5 and Tier 3 maps to CSCF Level 6.

Recommendations:

- a) Further work will be required at a statewide level to translate these concepts into a model of service and to develop implementation and funding plans.
- b) Formal planning including consultation with stakeholder groups will be required.

2. Inpatient extended treatment and rehabilitation care (Tier 3) is an essential service component

- It is understood that the combination of day program care, residential community-based care and acute inpatient care has been identified as a potential alternative to the current BAC or the proposed Tier 3 in the following service model elements document.
- From the perspective of the ECRG, Tier 3 is an essential component of the overall concept, as there is a small group of young people whose needs cannot be safely and effectively met through alternative service types (as represented by Tiers 1 and 2).
- The target group is characterised by severity and persistence of illness, very limited or absent community supports and engagement, and significant risk to self and/or others. Managing these young people in acute inpatient units does not meet their clinical, therapeutic or rehabilitation needs.
- The risk of institutionalisation is considered greater if the young person receives medium-term care in an acute unit (versus a design-specific extended care unit).
- Clinical experience shows that prolonged admissions of such young people to acute units can have an adverse impact on other young people admitted for acute treatment.
- Managing this target group predominantly in the community is associated with complexities of risk to self and others, and also the risk of disengaging from therapeutic services.

**Recommendation:**

- a) A Tier 3 service should be prioritised to provide extended treatment and rehabilitation for adolescents with severe and persistent mental illness.

3. Interim service provision if BAC closes and Tier 3 is not available is associated with risk

- Interim arrangements (after BAC closes and before Tier 3 is established) are at risk of offering sub optimal clinical care for the target group, and attention should be given to the therapeutic principles of safety and treatment matching, as well as efficient use of resources (e.g., inpatient beds).
- In the case of BAC being closed, and particularly if Tier 3 is not immediately available, a high priority and concern for the ECRG was the 'transitioning' of current BAC consumers, and those on the waiting list.
- Of concern to the ECRG is also the dissipation and loss of specialist staff skills and expertise in the area of adolescent extended care in Queensland if BAC closes and a Tier 3 is not established in a timely manner. This includes both clinical staff and education staff.

Recommendations:

- a) Safe, high quality service provision for adolescents requiring extended treatment and rehabilitation requires a Tier 3 service alternative to be available in a timely manner if BAC is closed.
- b) Interim service provision for current and 'wait list' consumers of BAC while Tier 3 service options are established must prioritise the needs of each of these individuals and their families/carers. 'Wrap-around care' for each individual will be essential.
- c) BAC staff (clinical and educational) must receive individual care and case management if BAC closes, and their specialist skill and knowledge must be recognised and maintained.

4. Duration of treatment

- A literature search by the ECRG identified a weak and variable evidence base for the recommended duration of treatment for inpatient care of adolescents requiring mental health extended treatment and rehabilitation.
- Predominantly, duration of treatment should be determined by clinical assessment and individual consumer need; the length of intervention most likely to achieve long term sustainable outcomes should be offered to young people.
- As with all clinical care, duration of care should also be determined in consultation with the young person and their guardian. Rapport and engagement with service providers is pivotal.

Recommendation:

- a) 'Up to 12 months' has been identified by the ECRG as a reasonable duration of treatment, but it was noted that this depends on the availability of effective step-down services and a



suitable community residence for the young person. It is important to note that like all mental health service provision, there will be a range in the duration of admission.

5. Education resource essential: on-site school for Tiers 2 and 3

- Comprehensive educational support underpins social recovery and decreases the likelihood of the long term burden of illness. A specialised educational model and workforce is best positioned to engage with and teach this target group.
- Rehabilitation requires intervention to return to a normal developmental trajectory, and successful outcomes are measured in psychosocial functioning, not just absence of psychiatric symptoms.
- Education is an essential part of life for young people. It is vital that young people are able to access effective education services that understand and can accommodate their mental health needs throughout the care episode.
- For young people requiring extended mental health treatment, the mainstream education system is frequently not able to meet their needs. Education is often a core part of the intervention required to achieve a positive prognosis.

Recommendations:

- a) Access to on-site schooling (including suitably qualified educators), is considered essential for Tiers 2 (day programs) and 3. It is the position of the ECRG that a Band 7 Specific Purpose School (provided by Department of Education, Training and Employment) is required for a Tier 3 service.
- b) As an aside, consideration should also be given to the establishment of a multi-site, statewide education service for children/adolescents in acute units (hub and spoke model).

6. Residential Service: Important for governance to be with CYMHS; capacity and capability requires further consideration

- There is no true precedent set in Queensland for the provision of residential or bed-based therapeutic community care (by non-government or private providers) for adolescents (aged up to 18 years) requiring extended mental health care.
- The majority of ECRG members identified concerns with regard to similar services available in the child safety sector. These concerns were associated with:
 - Variably skilled/trained staff who often had limited access to support and supervision;
 - High staff turn-over (impacting on consumer trust and rapport); and
 - Variable engagement in collaborative practice with specialist services such as CYMHS.

**Barrett Adolescent Strategy***Expert Clinical Reference Group***Recommendations:**

- a) It is considered vital that further consultation and planning is conducted on the best service model for adolescent non-government/private residential and therapeutic services in community mental health. A pilot site is essential.
- b) Governance should remain with the local CYMHS or treating mental health team.
- c) It is essential that residential services are staffed adequately and that they have clear service and consumer outcome targets.

7. Equitable access to AETRS for all adolescents and families is high priority; need to enhance service provision in North Queensland (and regional areas)

- Equity of access for North Queensland consumers and their families is considered a high priority by the ECRG.

Recommendations:

- a) Local service provision to North Queensland should be addressed immediately by ensuring a full range of CYMHS services are available in Townsville, including a residential community-based service.
- b) If a decision is made to close BAC, this should not be finalised before the range of service options in Townsville are opened and available to consumers and their families/carers.