

**Executive Support Unit
MINISTERIAL CORRESPONDENCE – ACTION SHEET**

Recfind Doc Type: MIN

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RCVD IN ESU: MINAD

20/12/2012 MINNRR

MINU

Reg No: MI 187045

DUE EXECUTIVE SUPPORT:

/ /

ACTION OFFICER: MDD09

COPIED TO: _____

Response required: Yes No Action Direct / Board to respond

Response signatory: Minister for Health Assistant Minister Chief of Staff

Closing contact details: Departmental N/A

Response Template*: A B C G

Standard Letter: _____

ESU Option Letter Number: _____

Redirect to: _____

Briefing note required: YES **NO**

Briefing note template*: A B C

* Templates can be found on QHEPS by clicking on Corporate Templates under *I am looking for* or from the tool bar click on Business Support, and under Administration click on Templates. Alternatively, in Word, File / New and then click on Qld Health Templates (in the task panel on the right hand side of the page). It is important that you access the templates from the website *every time* (and not use a previous template) as the templates are updated regularly.

COMMENTS: Refers MI186874

ESU Contact: Diane Cochran

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

- Acknowledgement Letter
- Acknowledgement Email
- Acknowledgement Not Required

Department Ref #: _____

Policy Advisor: Vaun

RESPONSE:

- Minister
- Assistant Minister
- Chief of Staff
- Board Chairs
- Refer to Department for Direct Reply (**Action Direct**)
- No Response Required (**Note and File**)
- BRIEFING NOTE REQUIRED
- BRIEFING NOTE NOT REQUIRED

Re-Issue: Email: Alison Evans

Potential Closure of Barrett Adolescent Centre

Previous Dept Ref #: one other NRR

COMMENTS / REQUESTS:

Reviewed by: _____

Date: 17/12/12

Courteney Hawkins

From: Alison Earls [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 18 December 2012 8:29 PM
To: WM Communications
Cc: [REDACTED] Health
Subject: Re: Potential Closure of Barrett Adolescent Centre

Hello Alice

Thanks so much for getting back in touch. I know that many people associated with the Barrett Centre are having an extremely difficult time with the uncertainty of the centre's future so clearly any information they can be provided with is invaluable.

Bearing in mind the key role that parents/carers play and the fact that they and current patients/students have so much invested in there continuing to be a place that offers the services that the Barrett Adolescent Centre does, many are more than enthusiastic to contribute to the decision-making process wherever they can. One such stakeholder has indicated that it is international best practice for any decisions made that have an impact on the services delivered to both consumers and carers, to have processes in place that allow for their views to be represented at all levels of the decision making process. They have indicated that this is clearly addressed in the National Standards for Mental Health Services under criteria 3 - Consumer and Carer Participation. So if the sole opportunity for those beyond the expert panel to express their concerns and/or to provide information is the email address to which I'm copying this, their involvement could feel tangential unless there was a representative on the panel advocating on their behalf. If/when you are able to release the names and relevant qualifications/experience of the members of the Reference Group, then, I know that those with direct contact to the Centre are very much hoping that a past patient or carer will be present amongst the group so that the consumers of the services are appropriately represented.

Thank you and regards,

Alison Earls

On 12/12/2012, at 4:54 PM, WM Communications wrote:

Hi Alison

The BAC Expert Clinical Reference Group met for the first time last week and will recommence weekly meetings in the new year. An email has been sent to all members checking they are comfortable with having their names released (we do not foresee this to be a problem). A statement introducing the group publically will be made early in the New Year.

The ECRG is has experienced clinicians that include:

- Child and youth psychiatrists from SE Qld, Nth Qld and Interstate, including representation from the Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Allied Health, Nursing and teaching professionals

They have been chosen to be a part of the Expert Clinical Reference Group because of their level of expertise derived from their current and previous roles.

The BAC fact sheets are available publically at

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/westmoreton/>

Should you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to email.

Kind regards

WM Communications
Alice

>>> Alison Earls [REDACTED] 12/7/2012 4:26 pm >>>
Hello

Having read today in a Brisbane Times article that Chief Executive Leslie Dwyer has indicated that the expert clinical reference group tasked with investigating the most appropriate model of care for adolescent mental health "comprises 11 members from across Queensland and interstate who are experts in the field of adolescent mental health", I'd be grateful if you could supply me with information on the backgrounds and/or areas of specialisation and experience of the 11 members.

As a concerned citizen, I was alarmed to hear of the possible closure of the Barrett centre as there is no other residential care option for adolescent mental health patients beyond acute facilities which are largely inappropriate for a significant number of these patients. So to terminate the health and education services currently offered by the Barrett facility will clearly leave a fatal gap in our state's healthcare provision.

I understand the need to look at the current economic situation as well as wider recommendations regarding the treatment of adolescent mental health but I'm very much hoping that the expertise within West Moreton Health would also ensure that there is representation on the reference group from professionals who have had direct experience with the Barrett centre itself. A decision cannot be made without input from those with a firsthand understanding of the unique care that is available at the centre and that cannot be provided by a group of professionals - no matter how well educated and renowned in their field they might be - if they have had no experience of the unique treatment options available at the Barrett facility. I would also expect that there are or will be opportunities for other interested parties, other than those with specific qualifications in adolescent mental health to provide informed input to assist the panel in their deliberations so I'm hoping that you can also get back to me to explain how this aspect of the review will proceed. Clearly, past and current patients and their family members as well as staff at the hospital and school operating in a range of roles all have invaluable contributions to offer with their own anecdotal evidence of the unique experience provided to patients at the Barrett Centre. Again, as such a facility does not exist elsewhere in Queensland, these are the only people who can provide tangible results from the services offered - so to omit such a resource could be seen to be verging on negligence.

I don't doubt that the Queensland government does not take this issue lightly and am reassured by the review currently being undertaken. However, were it to become clear that such a review was a bureaucratic or political measure when the closure of the centre was inevitable, that would be very concerning. If the review is a genuine process being undertaken with the best possible motives, then I would expect that input from a comprehensive range of experts (including those with direct experience with the Barrett Centre's operations) would be sought. This would enable a truly valid decision to be made on the future of these kinds of services for the young people of Queensland. I should clarify that I am sure that those working at all levels of West Moreton Health are diligent professional people dedicated to making a valuable contribution so I do not doubt their motives and efforts in any way. But unfortunately, I am reticent to place similar confidence in those issuing directives from positions largely defined by the wider ramifications of the political world. I raise this because I am seriously concerned that the lives of young Queenslanders may be lost within political machinations and it is those lives that I care about. Because there are many of them now who are vulnerable and there, unfortunately, will be many more in the future who require the support of a Barrett-like facility to navigate the dramatic challenges thrown their way.

I'm sure it's clear from the tone of this email that I oppose the closure of the centre. I am someone who has been in the lucky position not to have needed to have contact with the Barrett Centre in the past - which is why I feel so strongly about it. I might not know anyone who has required the facility but I, as I would imagine the majority of Queenslanders would have, have had experience with the devastation that mental illness inflicts on sufferers and their families/loved ones. So to lose a place that provides the vital support that the Barrett Centre does is to leave too many

young people to struggle on alone, or as will likely be the case, to take their future into their own hands.

A facility like the Barrett Centre is an opportunity for our government to create a model for other states to follow, to put forward as a centre of excellence for the world that provides a bridge between acute care and a productive life for those adolescents dealing with the most traumatic issue they'll ever deal with at the most challenging time of their life. So to find out that, instead of seizing this positive opportunity, our government is considering closing the Barrett Centre is beyond troubling.

I hope you can reassure me that the review panel is one that will consider input from the most comprehensive range of sources possible and that the outcome will be as a result of genuine consideration of all of the information provided. Because, if that is the case, the government cannot fail to ensure a future where the comprehensive range of services and experiences that Barrett currently provides are readily available so that Queenslanders can be proud of, and reassured by, the presence of a facility/facilities that has and will continue to save the lives of so many young people.

Thank you and regards,

Alison Earls

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