

From: Liz Marlay
Sent: 26 Dec 2012 14:13:49 +1000
To: WM TeamConnect
Subject: Closure of Barrett Adolescent Centre

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the proposed closure of the Barret Adolescent Centre.

Since the closure announcement in early November, [REDACTED] The Barrett Adolescent Centre (BAC) is an essential service in a society which struggles to keep our children safe. This is not the time to be closing BAC but rather the time to be planning the opening of more such centres. We should be re-thinking our monitoring & identification processes for our young people, not closing the Barrett Adolescent Centre.

I am disappointed to hear uninformed people justify this decision on the basis of "institutionalizing" young people. These young people are not being placed in institutionalised care at the Barrett Adolescent centre. BAC provides a safe intensive treatment facility for these children, while at the same time facilitating much needed programmes of coping strategies, emotional regulation and social skills which assist young people to cope in society and develop into responsible functioning adults. The patients form friendships and a sense of belonging, often for the first time, and are assisted in overcoming their social anxiety both at the centre and out in the community.

These patients are the lucky ones. So many at risk adolescents are not identified in our schools and in the wider society instead they are considered to be behaviour problems. Our current systems do not have adequate staff with the expertise to identify a mental health risk. There is a definite gap in our mental health system. Closing BAC is a step backwards. We would definitely like to see patients treated closer to their homes, therefore more centres need to be opened throughout Queensland.

Let's move forward and not backwards.

Regards,
Liz Marlay
(Teacher)