8.4.8 RESPONSE FROM TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT

Tasmania

MINISTER *for*
HEALTH *and* HUMAN SERVICES

9 May 2005

Mr John Mendoza
Chief Executive Officer
Mental Health Council of Australia
PO Box 174
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

Dear Mr Mendoza

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft report on your recent consultations. Unfortunately the timeframes you provide do not allow for a considered response to each individual item collected during your consultations.

You may be aware that the Department of Health and Human Services also conducted broad consultation with service providers, non-government organisations, consumers, carers and community representatives during 2004. A number of the issues identified in your report were raised during those consultations.

In November 2004 I released '*The Bridging The Gap Report.*' I commend this report to you. The report identifies key priority areas for attention and makes a set of relevant recommendations.

The Government has committed $47M to address the recommendations over a four year period. This represents the largest ever funding increase for service expansion in the 170 year history of Tasmania's Mental Health Services. The funding addresses the following initiatives:

- $4.36 million to create a total of 62 additional packages of care to support options for clients to live in the community, ranging from independent living to support in provided accommodation;
- $7.45 million to establish a 12-bed high support community facility in Northern Tasmania;
- $3.7 million to establish a 12-bed Cluster House for 24 hour seven day a week supported accommodation in the North West;
- $3.7 million to establish a 12-bed Cluster House for 24 hour seven day a week supported accommodation in the South;
- $7.32 million for an additional 26 full time equivalent clinical positions in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – more than double the current establishment of 21.5 FTEs;
- $5.85 million for an additional 16 FTE clinical positions in adult mental health services – an increase of more than 21 %;

- $2.55 million for an additional 6 FTE clinical positions to work with elderly mental health clients – an increase of one third on current numbers;
- $3.78 million to drive quality and safety improvements; assist with implementation of the Mental Health Act; and develop a mother and baby service, including:
  - Three additional quality positions – one Senior Quality Office statewide; one in the North and one in the North West to focus on quality and safety issues;
  - Establishment of four consumer and carer/family representative positions – two in the South and two in the North – to work with Mental Health Services to improve service quality and safety;
  - Appointment of a Senior Consultant Psychiatrist and additional support positions to support administration of the Mental Health Act and ensure the rights of consumers and advocates are protected in the delivery of all mental health services; and
  - Provision of a specialised mother and baby inpatient service to accommodate women with young children, experiencing mental health problems;
- $3.74 million to establish Recovery Programs in each region to provide activity, social and vocational skills-based programs to support recovery alongside community clinical and supported accommodation services; and
- $4.52 million to upgrade existing facilities, places and services to bring them into line with current specifications in the supported accommodation framework.

In addition, the Government funded an additional 18 mental health clinical positions in the community as part of the 2004/2005 budget.

2004 also saw the commencement of the Kids In Mind Tasmania strategy to provide support to children, young people, parents and carers and service reform and improvement in the mental health area. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has provided $1.05 million over two years for this strategy.

I am confident that these investments represents an important first step in recognising the need and continuing a planned, systematic approach to improving mental health services in Tasmania.

Thank you for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

David Llewellyn, MHA
DEPUTY PREMIER