

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Request for information in relation to therapeutic treatment services available to young people in juvenile justice and adults in prisons who have experienced child sexual abuse

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1. Background

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) was established in January 2013 and is tasked with examining the sexual abuse of children in the context of institutional settings throughout Australia.

The Royal Commission is undertaking work on the advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment service system available to victims of institutional child sexual abuse.

To assist this, the Royal Commission sought to collect information about therapeutic treatment services available to young people in juvenile justice and adults in prisons who have experienced child sexual abuse.

Specifically, the Royal Commission requested current information for each juvenile justice centre and adult prison in a number of jurisdictions in relation to:

- What therapeutic responses are available/are funded for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse?
- How is eligibility determined for these services and what number of inmates have taken up/been provided with these services in the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2016. Are there people who need services who aren't receiving them?
- What activities have prisons implemented (if anything) to ensure they are trauma informed?

A request for information was sent to Clinical Excellence Division, Department of Health and the following Hospital and Health Services (HHS's) were identified as potentially providing therapeutic treatment services to young people in juvenile justice and adults in prisons who have experienced child sexual abuse:

- Cairns and Hinterland HHS
- Central Queensland HHS
- Children's Health Queensland HHS
- Gold Coast HHS
- Metro North HHS
- Metro South HHS
- Townsville HHS
- West Moreton HHS
- Wide Bay HHS.

In response to this request, a number of the identified HHSs advised that there are strategies in place to ensure offenders are provided with adequate support/s such as access to Prison Mental Health Services (PMHS) and Visiting Medical Officers, should a disclosure of child sexual abuse occur or upon presentation of comorbidities to child sexual abuse.

PHMS is a state-wide program of the *Queensland Forensic Mental Health Service* (QFMHS). The QFMHS is led by the Director, QFMHS with the support of Service Managers in Brisbane and Townsville and five State wide positions.

The PMHS is coordinated at a state-wide level by a State-wide PMHS Program Coordinator. South East Queensland prisons (covering 75% of the State's prison population in eight centres) are serviced by West Moreton HHS. Additional Coordinator positions are located in Central Queensland HHS, Townsville HHS and Cairns and Hinterland HHS.

The PMHS is comprised of a multidisciplinary mental health team providing assessment, treatment and management for prisoners with a severe mental illness, or those who are at risk of developing a severe mental illness. These services aim to be equivalent to those available within the community.

Currently two clinical programs operate within the PMHS:

- the General Mental Health Program, which operates as a prison in-reach service to people within correctional facilities throughout Queensland; and
- the Transition Co-ordination Program, which supports patients with complex needs in reintegrating in to the community and establishing contact with appropriate mental health services.

The Transition Co-ordination Program is currently established in South East Queensland with further programs in development for Central and Northern Queensland. This program partners with a specifically funded non-government organisation which provides ongoing support for up to 6 months. It uses the Recovery Model as a framework for engaging participants and facilitating their reintegration into the community.

2. Responses

What therapeutic responses are available/are funded for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse?

Cairns and Hinterland HHS

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Division of Family Health and Well-Being has Offender Health as part of its portfolio of responsibilities, advise that that there is no program at Lotus Glen specifically designed to assist victims of child sexual abuse. However, if the offender is identified as a victim of child sexual abuse, strategies are in place to ensure that the offender is supported and the ongoing care is managed professionally.

Children's Health Queensland HHS

The Mental Health Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Service (MHATODS) is an integrated dual diagnosis service within the Children's Health Queensland Child and Youth Mental Health Service. MHATODS is a multidisciplinary team that provides assessment and treatment services to young people with mental health, substance use and dual diagnosis issues who are in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC).

MHATODS aspires to provide the same high quality mental health and substance use support to young people in BYDC that would be available to young people generally in the community.

In addition to direct clinical services, MHATODS also contributes to collaborative care planning and provides clinical advice to other services that operate within the detention centre such as Health, Youth Justice and Education Queensland. The service also has a strong focus on linking young people in with local community based mental health and/or drug and alcohol support services upon release from detention, where required. Any young person in youth detention with a substance use disorder and/or persistent symptoms resulting from a mental health disorder who would benefit from clinical intervention can be referred to the service.

MHATODS acknowledges the vast over representation of young people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or come from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, in BYDC. The service aims to provide culturally sensitive clinical and practical support to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people and young people from CALD backgrounds with mental health and substance use problems. MHATODS has Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers who play a crucial role in engaging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people into the service and facilitating access to follow up support to young people upon their release from detention. The service also has access to Multicultural Mental Health co-ordinators who provide culturally informed advice and resources on individual clinical cases as required.

The prevalence of trauma related disorders, some of which can result from childhood sexual abuse is high within the MHATODS client population. MHATODS adopts an integrated approach to treating young people with trauma such as childhood sexual

abuse. Every young person who is accepted into the service receives a comprehensive mental health assessment. The assessment is used to inform decisions about treatment and recovery goals, including the consumer's goals and strengths. The nature of the treatment intervention provided is based on the individual consumer's risk, needs and responsivity factors. The range of evidence-based therapeutic clinical interventions offered include, but are not limited to: cognitive behavioural therapy, narrative therapy, dialectical behavioural therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy and schema therapy. All clinicians are trained in these specialist skills to provide effective evidenced-informed interventions.

Child and family centred care is a core value of the service. MHATODS engages with the young person's family in their mental health care as much as possible.

The Consultant Psychiatrist is responsible for the clinical management of the team and is the first point of contact in relation to clinical issues. The Consultant Psychiatrist and Senior Psychiatry Registrars make decisions about case allocation and treatment planning and have a clear role regarding prescribing, administering and monitoring medication, as indicated by clinical need.

Central Queensland HHS

From a Capricornia Offender Health Service perspective, any offender that discloses that they are a victim of sexual abuse is offered counselling through the Queensland Corrective Services counsellors and the Psychology Team as required. For any offender that has a mental health history, referral to Prison Mental Health Services is made via weekly interagency meetings.

All victims of sexual abuse can access the above services, and there is also access to the Sexual Assault Hotline.

PMHS works with the client to encourage them to make contact with the hotline if they felt they would like to pursue counselling as well as liaising with the Psychology Team to ensure they are aware of the client and their past abuse (with consent) to offer support. PMHS also provides a collaborative approach to ensuring the client is able to access the appropriate services.

Gold Coast HHS

Gold Coast HHS provides a Visiting Medical Officer, centre-based nursing staff, and visits by PMHS for victims of sexual abuse with any mental health disorders that have arisen as a result of that abuse.

Queensland Health has also been running The Scrapbook Program for the past two years. This is a self-guided drug and alcohol relapse prevention program coordinated by the centre-based nursing staff and managed by the Gold Coast HHS Alcohol and Other Drugs Service. There are usually between five and 10 participants per week, with positive feedback received overall. This program includes participation of victims of sexual abuse with any alcohol and other drug disorders that have arisen as a result of that abuse.

Organisations including Sisters Inside are funded by Queensland Health to provide sexual assault counselling. This is a confidential service and includes persons who have been the victim of adult sexual abuse.

Metro North HHS

Metro North HHS advised that any prisoner referred to Metro North HHS would have appropriate access to the Visiting Medical Officer and PMHS as required.

Townsville HHS

The North Queensland Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Service (NQAFMHS) is an in-reach service to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, providing mental health, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs services to young people admitted to the detention centre.

Due to the unpredictability around how long young people will remain in detention, the service provision focuses on providing psycho-education, motivational interviewing and management of mental health symptomology rather than long term therapeutic work in relation to addressing trauma issues.

Most of the clients are young people on remand who may not be in the detention centre for more than a few days or weeks.

Additionally, young people can be bailed by the courts at any time without warning. This makes it difficult to plan for longer term work and requires a cautious approach to the kind of intervention undertaken with young people.

Therefore, the treatment plan tends to focus on skills training, sleep hygiene, distress tolerance and emotional regulation rather than trauma and attachment focussed therapy.

Young people who disclose a child sexual abuse history are referred to supports in the community if they are agreeable for this to occur. These non-government supports include Act for Kids, Centacare and Relationships Australia. The NQAFMHS also refer young people to Victims Assist who can fund ongoing counselling for eligible young people.

PMHS provide additional mental health support as required that includes encouraging use of positive coping strategies, additional PMHS contact and assisting management of flashbacks and impacted sleep patterns etc.

Bravehearts is the NGO that female clients at Townsville Women's Correctional Centre are able to contact via telephone as required. In addition, Relationships Australia provides video link support to Townsville Correctional Centre (men's) as required. The NGO input was arranged by the Royal Commission separate to the QCS input.

West Moreton HHS

Prisoners are able to access generic services provided through Queensland Corrective Services, including access to a psychologist, as well as referral pathways to PMHS.

In addition, there is access to sexual health services if required. Sexual health services are about sexual and reproductive health, health promotion, prophylaxis, needle exchange. Essentially it is all sexual health topics. Sexual Health services are offered at Brisbane Womens Correctional Centre. Sexual health is offered by TeleHealth at Wolston Correctional Centre. Nothing is offered at Borallan Training Correctional Centre and Brisbane Correctional Centre.

Borallon Training and Correctional Centre (BTCC) has a Mental Health Nursing position (a Credential Mental Health Nurse, CNC), who undertakes risk screening of all prisoners transferred to the BTCC following reception and follow-up as required.

Within the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, all young people who report sexual assault are referred to sexual health services and a clinical nurse for counselling and support. The MHATODS team from Lady Cilento Children's Hospital also see them for counselling and support.

Wide Bay HHS

PMHS do not provide any specialist services to those prisoners that have experienced childhood sexual assault. Prisoners would be referred to other services within the Correctional facility, if appropriate.

PMHS would only provide assessment and treatment if the person had an Axis 1 diagnosis comorbid to the child sexual assault.

How is eligibility determined for these services and what number of inmates have taken up/been provided with these services in the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2016? Are there people who need services who aren't receiving them?

Cairns and Hinterland HHS

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Division of Family Health and Well-Being who have Offender Health as part of their portfolio of responsibilities advise that there is no program at Lotus Glen specifically designed to assist the victims of child sexual abuse. However, if the offender is identified as a victim of child sexual abuse, strategies are in place to ensure that the offender is supported and the ongoing care is managed professionally.

Children's Health Queensland HHS

Any young person who is remanded in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) and is presenting with moderate to severe mental health or substance use difficulties is eligible for the MHATODS service. Priority for access is given to consumers who pose a significant risk to themselves or others, present with symptoms of a severe psychotic illness, trauma or mood disturbance.

There is a high prevalence of trauma-related disorders in the MHATODS client population. MHATODS conducted a research study and found that approximately 75% of males and 90% of females in youth detention met the clinical criteria for mental health and trauma related issues (Stathis et al, 2008). The number of young people who met the clinical criteria for trauma related disorders and had specifically experienced sexual abuse is difficult to ascertain. MHATODS utilises the Integrated Classification and Diagnostic Tool for Community-based Mental Health Services (ICD-10 AM) to diagnose and record mental health issues. This tool does not allow one to discriminate the type of abuse or trauma experienced by the young person. The focus is on identifying and categorising the symptoms the young person presents with as a result of the trauma rather than defining the nature of the trauma itself. Additionally, the figure quoted above does not take into consideration the young people in youth detention who may have experienced sexual abuse but are not displaying trauma related symptoms and have not been referred to mental health services.

A large number of young people in youth detention tend to have short stays in youth detention because they are on remand. MHATODS makes considerable efforts to engage young people who have trauma related issues in appropriate treatment intervention where clinically indicated. Clinicians are cautious about delving into the details of the young person's trauma if there is a chance that the young person could be released from youth detention suddenly and may not have access to adequate clinical support in the community as this could have negative outcomes for the young person. If a young person is identified as having significant trauma related issues and is in custody for a short period of time, MHATODS attempts to link the young person in with appropriate clinical support in the community rather than engage them in specific therapeutic interventions for their trauma whilst in custody. Their treatment would focus more on general mental health coping strategies.

Central Queensland HHS

All victims are eligible for counselling through the Queensland Corrective Services, the Psychology Team and PMHS and there are no criteria to meet for this service.

Numbers who have accessed this service between 2011 and 2016 is unknown.

Gold Coast HHS

As offenders can list themselves to be seen and are referred by Queensland Corrective Service psychology teams, we are unable to advise the actual number of offenders seen.

Metro North HHS

Metro North HHS advised that any prisoner referred to Metro North HHS would have appropriate access to the Visiting Medical Officer and Prison Mental Health as required.

Townsville HHS

Every young person who is admitted into the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre is triaged each morning by the North Queensland Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Service (NQAFMHS) Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT). If any of the below criteria are present, young people are prioritised for an intake assessment:

- clinically significant mental health conditions;
- young people experiencing physical symptoms of withdrawal from substances;
- young people taking substances through intravenous routes;
- recent presentation/s to Emergency Department or a mental health service/s;
- recent suicidal ideation or self-harm;
- all young people currently open to another CYMHS service both Townsville and other networks, including YTH ATODS; or
- any young person with a current mental health referral.

If young people agree to engage with our service, then this is discussed by the NQAFMHS MDT at weekly clinical review meetings with a decision made around opening the young person to our service and a treatment plan is endorsed.

Young people who present with a significant trauma history or who are in need of ongoing, long term therapy regarding a history of child sexual abuse are referred to an appropriate service in the community to provide this body of therapeutic work.

PMHS has been informed by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) psychology when Royal Commission interviews occurred to allow PMHS to provide additional support to clients if/as required.

This information sharing has occurred at the PMHS/QCS interagency weekly meetings as required.

West Moreton HHS

Unfortunately, data collected from occasions of service is unable to provide definitive numbers of prisoners accessing services for a presenting problem of child sexual abuse.

All prisoners receive information on accessing health services, all medical request forms are triaged and referred to the appropriate service.

There are no waiting lists at BTCC, however we understand Brisbane Correctional Centre, Brisbane Womens Correctional Centre and Wolston Correctional Centre may have some waiting periods due to prison population growth.

Wide Bay HHS

PMHS does not provide any specialist services to those prisoners that have experienced childhood sexual assault. They would be referred to other services within the Correctional facility, if appropriate.

PMHS would only provide assessment and treatment if the person had an Axis 1 diagnosis comorbid to the child sexual assault.

What activities have prisons implemented (if anything) to ensure they are trauma informed?

Cairns and Hinterland HHS

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Division of Family Health and Well-Being who have Offender Health as part of their portfolio of responsibilities advise that there is no program at Lotus Glen specifically designed to assist the victims of child sexual abuse. However, if the offender is identified as a victim of child sexual abuse, strategies are in place to ensure that the offender is supported and the ongoing care is managed professionally.

Children's Health Queensland HHS

A trauma informed approach is being adopted by the BYDC and Youth Justice more generally. MHTAODS have been involved in facilitating trauma informed care training to detention centre staff at BYDC. The training aims to provide staff in the detention centre with the knowledge and skills to understand, recognise and respond to the effects of trauma. MHATODS liaise regularly with detention centre staff in relation to individual clinical cases to assist them to work collaboratively with young people to help them develop more adaptive ways of responding to their emotional and behavioural triggers.

Central Queensland HHS

Prisons have gained awareness through education and promotion around the identification of sexual abuse and access to services.

The Queensland Corrective Service counsellors, Psychology Team and health services work collaboratively with victim consent to ensure they have access to the appropriate treatment and support.

Gold Coast HHS

The Royal Commission facilitated an information session in June this year that provided information on the investigation into Institutional responses to child sexual abuse. This was not a mandatory session.

Metro North HHS

Metro North HHS advised that any prisoner referred to Metro North HHS would have appropriate access to the Visiting Medical Officer and Prison Mental Health as required.

Townsville HHS

A state-wide training package in relation to "Trauma Informed Practice" was developed collaboratively between Youth Justice Services' staff, Cleveland Youth Detention Centre staff and Evolve Therapeutic Services.

This training was provided to Youth Justice and Cleveland Youth Detention Centre staff from May until October 2016 co-jointly by Evolve Therapeutic Services, CYDC and Youth Justice Services staff.

Discussion is occurring for the ongoing provision of training around “Trauma Informed Practice” in the future.

In relation to these specific questions, the staff at Townsville Women’s Correctional Centre did not have specific information as the PMHS advised the Royal Commission arranged the interviews and follow up independently of the QCS psychology team/staff.

West Moreton HHS

While WMHHS is unable to respond on behalf of Queensland Correctional Services, there are a number of programs known to the health service which includes:

- Assisting vulnerable prisoners and Sexual Assault awareness training.
- Psychological services.
- Weekly Prisoner induction which is inclusive of QCS and external providers – MAX solution and TAFE.
- Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Service have produced Trauma Informed Practice training, and Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG) staff and Education QLD (EQ) staff have all been invited to attend.

Wide Bay HHS

PMHS do not provide any specialist services to those prisoners that have experienced childhood sexual assault. They would be referred to other services within the Correctional facility, if appropriate.

PMHS would only provide assessment and treatment if the person had an Axis 1 diagnosis comorbid to the child sexual assault.