



Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program





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A better mental health system

Mental illness has a significant effect on our community. Each year one in five Australians over 16 will experience mental illness. Overall mental health activity is rising with 45 percent of Australians predicted to experience a mental illness in their lifetime.

The way we provide mental health care services and infrastructure has changed. Standalone inpatient mental health services no longer align with contemporary best practice.

Over the past 20 years, the planning of hospital facilities has included mental health inpatient services. This has meant new mental health units have been embedded into hospitals across NSW. The approach has helped break down the stigma surrounding mental health and supported the assessment, treatment and recovery of a person with a lived experience of mental illness.

Creating capacity with new infrastructure

The NSW Government will build better mental health care services and infrastructure. To do this, the government has made its largest capital investment ever to mental health infrastructure.

The Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program (SWMHIP) was announced in 2018. The \$700M program will support the delivery of mental health care reforms in NSW. The SWMHIP will deliver more and better co-designed facilities for people with mental health needs, their families, carers and staff.

It will make sure that the government's investment meets future demand for services and improves people's access to specialist services.

Working together

At Health Infrastructure the needs and concerns of all our stakeholders are important to us. We are committed to genuine, respectful consultation and engagement with the community throughout the lifespan of our program and its projects.

We are doing more to partner with people with a lived experience of mental illness, carers and staff to co-design facilities that meet the needs of the people who use them. Co-design aims for results that are practical in 'the real world'. Our facilities will be person-centred, safe and therapeutic environments where integrated holistic care is delivered.

NSW Health's local health districts and specialty health networks remain instrumental in leading and enabling changes at the regional level, along with their local communities.

The SWMHIP will focus on gaps in specialist statewide services. It will not replace the local health districts and specialty health networks planning for future mental health demands.



What's in the SWMHIP?

Both inpatient and community-based mental health care are important and complementary parts of the health system. The focus of mental health reforms is shifting the mental health care model from hospital bed-based services to a community-based approach that emphasises recovery.

Recovery-oriented practices support people in their individual journey to achieve their best outcome for mental and physical health, and wellbeing.

Since the announcement of the SWMHIP, state level planning has been undertaken for a range of specialist mental health services including services for:

- older people
- children and adolescents
- mothers and their babies
- forensic patients
- community based living.

These plans show an increasing demand for services, a need to change the way we deliver mental health care to people, and the benefits of delivering safe, high quality, integrated and holistic care that focuses on recovery.

Facilities are now being planned and co-designed with the active involvement of people with a lived experience of mental illness, their families, carers and staff.

Older Persons Unit

As the NSW 65+ age group increases, the number of older people with mental illness

is also projected to increase significantly, rising to over 300,000 in 2026. The NSW Government's mental health reforms promote improved community mental health care and support for older people with mental illness, by supporting teams providing specialist mental health services for older people.

A 20-bed Older Person Unit at Campbelltown Hospital has been identified as a priority in stage two of the Campbelltown Hospital Redevelopment. It will improve the accessibility of Older Persons Mental Health services, promote consistent good practice in OPMH services, and support effective and appropriate care for older people with mental illness.

Medium Secure Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit

Stage two of the Campbelltown Hospital Redevelopment will also deliver 16 civil secure rehabilitation beds for people with complex mental illness who require care in a secure environment, but who are not forensic or correctional patients. This unit will provide rehabilitation in a therapeutic

and safe environment, and support transition to more independent living.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit

A new statewide service unit has been announced for young people as part of stage two of the Nepean Hospital Redevelopment. The planning and co-design of the new 10-bed child and adolescent mental health facility at Nepean Hospital is now underway.

Mother and Baby Units

The NSW Government announced funding for two dedicated Mother and Baby units (MBU). These 8 bed units each at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Westmead Hospital are an important commitment. They will ensure the right care and treatment is provided for mothers and their babies in NSW when an acute hospital admission is necessary due to mental illness.

The first-of-their-kind within the NSW public hospital system, the modern, purpose-built MBUs will help mothers experiencing mental illness to remain with their newborns during psychiatric care. They will prevent the potential harm of separation on the development of the parent-infant relationship, parental functioning and family wellbeing.



Forensic Mental Health Services

The SWMHIP will also address challenges faced by the NSW forensic mental health system by delivering mental health services in appropriate therapeutic environments with the right level of security to address patient complexity and needs.

The program will deliver a number of low and medium secure forensic beds across the State. Planning has commenced for new low secure forensic beds to be delivered in western Sydney.

In addition, the program will deliver a new 5-bed mental health intensive care unit to be located at the Forensic Hospital, Malabar. The unit is being designed to support the rehabilitation, recovery and return of patients to standard forensic health.

The Pathways to Community Living Initiative (PCLI) Stage 2

The Pathways to Community Living Initiative (PCLI) Stage 2 is a statewide approach to support hospital long-stay in-patients with severe and persistent mental illness re-establish their lives in the community.

This initiative is part of the Government's commitment to strengthen mental health care in NSW by developing effective community-based residential care and support options for people experiencing long stays (over 365 days) in mental health inpatient units.

For more information on the Program contact us
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Cover image

This mural was created especially for the Coffs Harbour Acute Mental Health Unit

Artist Lily Clegg

Lilly is a Gumbaynggirr artist with strong ancestral ties to the land and ocean. This relationship is what inspires her art: Nature and connection to Country. Using a variety of mediums, she is on a journey to learn about her culture and language, and to help preserve knowledge and inspire healing through art and self-expression.

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