

First Draft Proposal for Education Service Delivery following closure of BAC

BARRETT AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE – CURRENT EDUCATION PROVISION

School and Community Partnerships

Barrett develops productive partnerships with students and their families and carers to allow every adolescent the ability to connect and engage with the school and maximise learning outcomes for our adolescents (Parent and Community Engagement Framework). This is done through constant communication with expert staff and a positive; strengths based approach that collaborates with the local and extended community.

Barrett's partnership with Queensland Heath is vital, as the role of expert mental health trained staff is essential in optimising the health of the adolescents, thereby enabling learning. Barrett also maintains important partnerships with a number of State High Schools, Tertiary Education facilities, government and non-government organisations and businesses.

To develop and maintain these productive partnerships at Barrett the school is staffed with 5.3 teachers who are experienced in the area of mental health and secondary schooling.

School Curriculum

Barrett's curriculum is planned and sequenced around the needs of individual adolescents. The school caters for students on a continuum from those who have had no successful school engagement for years and lack some areas of foundation knowledge to those who are completing their QCS and applying for university positions. Each student develops a Personal Education Plan in consultation with teaching and support staff and their families.

The curriculum focuses on reading, writing, numeracy and science as well as attainment and transition. Students are given opportunities to learn in these areas with a multitude of strategies and integrated units. Staff are continually planning and reviewing to improve learning.

Barrett has undergone two Teaching and Learning Audits which have informed the school explicit improvement agenda. The result of the second Audit indicated that the school had worked on the recommendations of the first Audit and was able to show improvement.

Teaching Practice

Barrett focuses on the achievement of every student through the use of the Personal Education Plan (PEP), weekly Case Conferences and regular Case Reviews. A logical pedagogical model guides Barrett's formal and informal Collaborative Reflection process (developed out of a health supervision model).

Our pedagogical practice is based on evidence based research in the areas of mental health, trauma and adolescent development. It is a very specialised pedagogy that has been presented internationally.

Teachers have high expectations that all students will develop a Personal Education Plan and work towards its completion. The PEP is used to guide targeted teaching, monitor achievement and report in One School.

Barrett uses a whole –school approach to define, teach and support appropriate behaviours and follows this up with a team approach to develop individual student improvement strategies.

Principal Leadership and School Capability

The principal at Barrett demonstrates the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to effectively lead an explicit school improvement agenda. The principal focuses on core learning priorities, student-centred planning, quality curriculum, student achievement and improvement, pedagogical practice, teacher feedback and quality assessment.

The principal engages with students and teachers daily. He does this by participating in the classrooms, in outdoors and sports activities and on excursions which supports teaching practice and contributes to improved student outcomes.

The school principal and staff adhere to the Performance and Development Plan framework and contribute to the whole school professional development plan as well as individual development priorities.

BARRETT AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE – THE WAY FORWARD FOR BARRETT

Education plays a large and important role in the lives of young people and in light of the imminent closure of BAC, it is essential that there continues to be comprehensive educational support for these young people. Mainstream education services are frequently unable to support young people with severe mental health illness. An educational model such as that at BAC is best positioned to provide this support. The provision of such specialised educational support re-engages young people with their community thereby underpinning improvements in psychosocial functioning and long term recovery.

The present school model at Barrett needs to be maintained in as close a structure as possible, with similar staffing, partnerships, curriculum, teaching practice, principal leadership and school capability because it best serves the Department of Education, Training and Employment's aims of the United in Our Pursuit of Excellence. At present Barrett is a Band 7, special purpose school.

The New Educational Provision (NEP) is committed to providing a world-class education for adolescents with mental health issues from Queensland and surrounds. The NEP will ensure that every day in every classroom a safe, supportive, inclusive and disciplined teaching environment is maintained to foster student engagement and learning. It will optimise the wellbeing of every student so they are able to learn to their best ability (Learning and Wellbeing Framework).

The curriculum in the NEP will focus on the core learning priorities through an integrated approach across the timetable. Our priorities are Reading, Writing (including spelling, grammar and punctuation), Numeracy and Science. It will also focus on attainment and transition of our students (P-12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework). There will be a special emphasis on Vocational Education. Past students have clearly and repeatedly told us that any work in this area has been invaluable to their future lives and continued recovery.

Operational Recommendations

Purpose

Provision of educational services to students for who mainstream schooling is inadequate as a result of complex mental health needs. These services include the provision of:

- a) Onsite educational options
 - Literacy, Numeracy, Science and other curriculum areas as available
 - SDE, Access 10, vocational training, work experience etc.
- b) Facilitation of transition to mainstream school
- c) Transition to tertiary education or employment.

- d) Consultation and provision of professional development and support for teachers/schools managing students with mental health disorders
 - Support with development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) and PEP
 - Support and training around pedagogy
 - Support and training around educational adjustments
- e) Outreach service, visiting teachers to homes of students to support and facilitate educational programs
 - Visiting teacher 1.5 hours per day

It is envisioned that increases in transitions to mainstream schools would require support from teaching staff from this new service toward the transition school. Likewise, increasing enrolments to the new service would result in increased teaching time at the new service or increase in outreach service provisions.

Facility

It is considered necessary in order to maintain the expertise of staff and to provide appropriate educational services that a school building/facility is required. Ideally this would be a purpose built school co-located with an extended treatment and rehabilitation inpatient unit – however as this is unlikely there are suggestions below:

- Existing school facility (vacant school or building)
- Facility co-located with an organisation currently providing mental health services to young people

Staffing

It is imperative that the specialist skills, knowledge and experience of current educational staff be recognised and utilised.

- 5.3 specialist teaching staff with experience in teaching students with mental health disorders
- 108.2 hours per week of Teacher aides – with experience in
- 17 hours per week Administration Officer
- 1 day per week Guidance officer
- Supported by at least 1 full time Allied health staff with experience in child and youth mental health to case manage mental health treatment and visiting health staff as required

Target Group

- a) Students who are current inpatients and day patients of BAC and those on the waiting list
- b) Students aged from 13 – 17 years who are diagnosed with a mental illness that is severe and persistent and
 - Have a history of either significant absences from school or disengagement from learning, or for whom mainstream education is inappropriate or inadequate
 - History of disengagement from their community
 - Students who pose significant risk to self and /or others

This proposal is only in draft form and would require broader consultation and planning to guide decision making.