

Priority area 2 Integrating and improving the care system

The Queensland Government has invested significantly in integrating and improving the care system to ensure the mental health system has the capacity to meet the needs of consumers, families and carers, and to promote resilience and recovery.

Summary of achievements

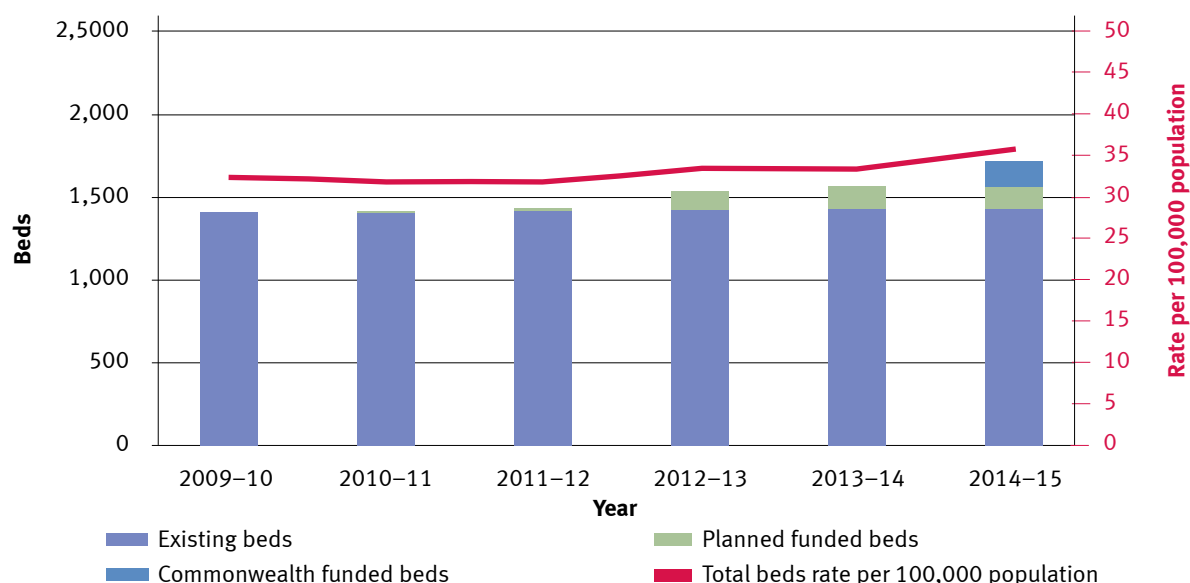
- invested \$380.6 million to integrate and improve the care system
- established 569 new positions in community mental health
- commenced work to deliver 300 additional inpatient beds
- supported consumers and carers with representation at key decision-making forums and through the Consumer and Carer Worker Network
- implemented a new Consumer Carer and Family Participation Framework
- established service models that support integrated services

Increase in inpatient beds

More than \$148 million has been allocated towards 17 capital works projects, to deliver 277 new or upgraded inpatient beds for acute and extended stay treatment. This will result in a net increase of 146 new beds across Queensland. Four of these projects have been completed, with 79 per cent of work for additional new inpatient beds to be completed by June 2012. By July 2012, ten of the 17 Capital works projects will be completed. In light of constraints experienced by some projects, alternative construction methods will be applied to ensure the capital projects are accelerated.

Inpatient services will also be boosted by a further 154 beds in partnership with the Australian Government (through the Health and Hospitals Fund) and the National Partnership on Improving Public Hospital Services. These investments will increase Queensland's inpatient bed numbers and contribute to the plan's 2017 target of 40 beds per 100,000 of total population.

Figure 2 Projected progress of inpatient beds in Queensland, 2009–10 to 2014–15



Source: Queensland Health, Queensland Government Population Projections to 2056 (2011 edition), Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury.

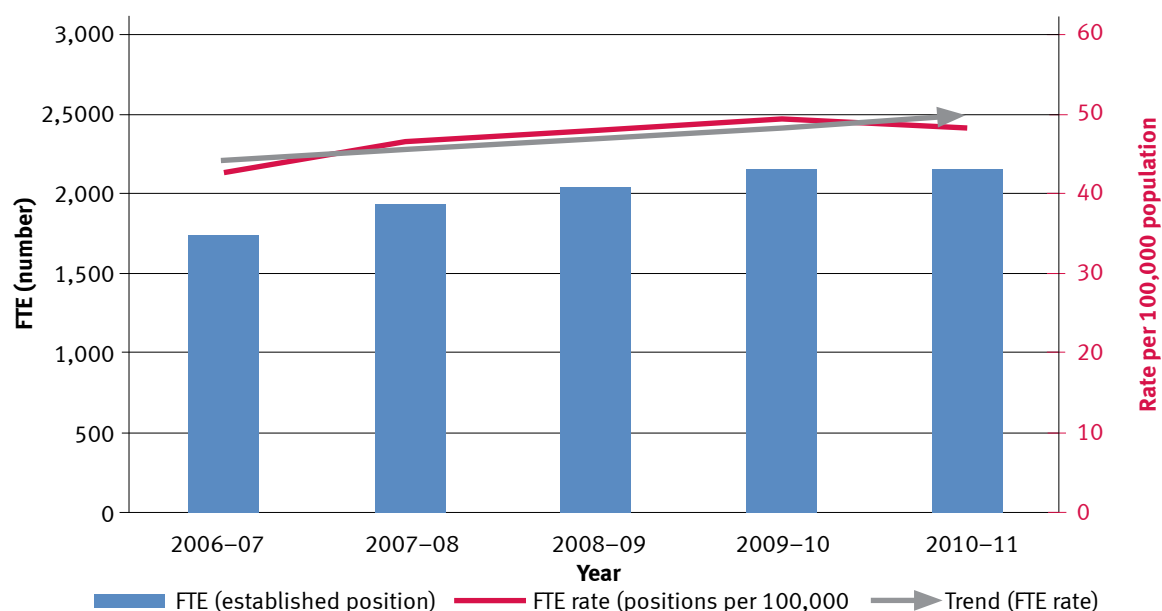
Increasing mental health clinical staff

The Queensland Government has provided funding under the plan for more than 400 new mental health positions in community mental health services since 2007. Additional positions have also been funded by other important initiatives, including Homeless Outreach Teams, Evolve Therapeutic Services for young people in care, and strengthening the Forensic Mental Health system.

As at March 2011, an additional 569 community mental health positions have been established.

These additional positions have driven improvements in the rate of clinical staff per 100,000 population. Notwithstanding Queensland's significant population growth, the number of clinical staff had reached 47 FTE per 100,000 of population by March 2011, or 67 per cent of the 2017 target. It is expected that, with additional staff funded from the 2011–12 budget, the 2011 target of 48 FTE per 100,000 of population will be met.

Figure 3 Queensland's community mental health staff—full time equivalent (FTE), 2006–07 to 2010–11

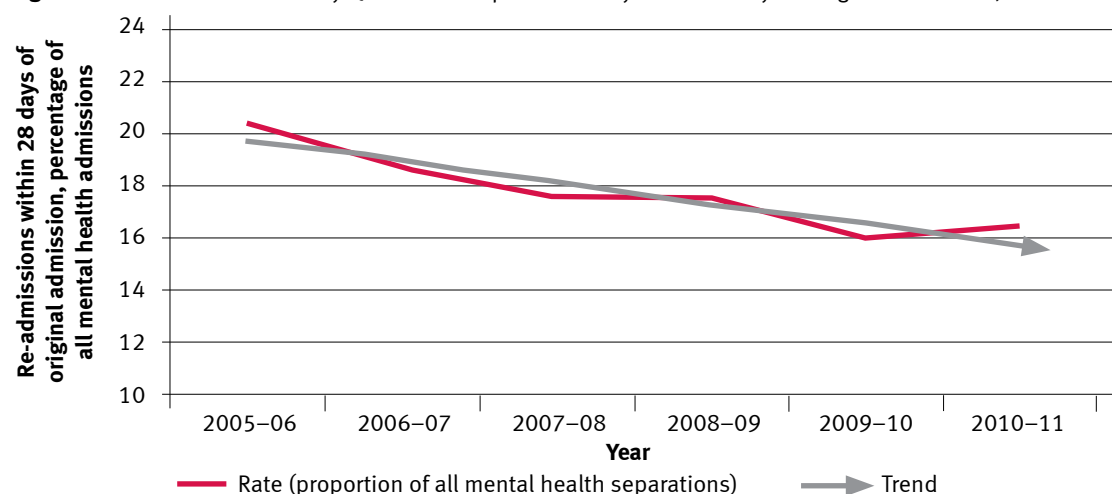


Source: Queensland Health, Queensland Government Population Projections to 2056 (2011 edition), Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury.

Decreasing inpatient care readmissions

Since 2006–07, readmissions within 28 days of inpatient treatment have decreased from more than 20 per cent in 2005–06, to 17 per cent of all separations in 2010–11. This demonstrates that increased investment in the mental health system is delivering more sustainable patient care and reducing unplanned readmissions.

Figure 4 Readmission rate to any Queensland inpatient facility within 28 days of original admission, 2005–06 to 2010–11.



Source: Data for 2005–06 to 2007–08 from Report on Government Services 2011 (RoGS), Productivity Commission. Data for 2008–09 to 2010–11 sourced from Queensland Health Admitted Patient Data Collection (QHAPDC) according to RoGS methodology. Data for 2010–11 is preliminary.

More Queenslanders accessing clinical mental health care

The Queensland Government’s increased investment in additional staff and improved services has also enabled more Queenslanders to access community based clinical mental health services. In 2010–11, around 77,000 consumers accessed care through community based clinical mental health services in Queensland. This is the highest number since the commencement of the plan.

Consumer perceptions of care

The plan’s success can be measured, in part, by examining the perceptions of consumers who use public mental health services.

Queensland Health conducted a survey of consumers of its public mental health services in 2010, to determine their views about the care they received. These surveys will occur annually and will be used to help drive improvements in mental health services.

The survey results showed that consumers were broadly satisfied with the service and care they received from Queensland Health’s mental health services. In particular, adult consumers responded very positively to the question that “staff here believe that I can grow, change and recover”. Youth consumers in community services also responded positively to questions that measured how well they were respected by staff.

In areas where there was lower satisfaction recorded, services have worked with consumers to develop action plans to address issues identified in the survey, and improve the quality of the care provided. It is expected that improvements to these scores resulting from action plans will be seen in future results.

Priority area 3

Participation in the community

The Queensland Government has invested in helping people with mental illness to more effectively participate in the community. These initiatives aim to help people living with mental illness improve their quality of life, by facilitating access to stable housing, income support, education, employment and non-government services.

Summary of achievements

- invested \$110.6 million to improve participation in the community for people with a mental illness
- established additional transitional recovery services to help people exiting hospital connect with community services
- established additional housing and support program places to support people exiting hospital following treatment
- established additional personal support packages for people exiting hospital into hostel/boarding house accommodation through the resident recovery initiative
- established additional personal support packages for people with a mental illness transitioning from correctional facilities
- established additional places for peer-operated crisis and respite services

Better access to support services

The plan allocates \$110.6 million to this priority for 2007–2012. Ninety-seven per cent of these funds have now been invested, to increase access to support services and accommodation in the community for people with a mental illness. These initiatives include:

- accommodation and personal support services through the non-government sector to:
 - enable people to transition out of hospital in a timely manner
 - reduce readmissions to hospital
 - establish Australia's first consumer-operated crisis prevention/respite houses to provide short term support
- personal support for consumers moving into social housing
- early intervention services (community and residential) for young people aged 15–25 years who are showing the early signs and symptoms of mental health problems.

The Government now funds more than 100 non-government mental health community organisations statewide, which provide support to approximately 14,500 people annually including:

- 470 people in social housing
- 800 people in hostel and boarding house accommodation
- 120 people recently released from a correctional facility
- 300 people through peer-operated services
- 90 young people through the early intervention Time-Out-House initiative

- 27 people transitioning out of hospital care
- more than 12,500 people with other supports through a range of existing community mental health programs and disability services.

The Government has also supported nine new social enterprises through the Queensland Inclusive Social Enterprise Project (QISEP). These enterprises have helped more than 80 people with a mental illness who had experienced difficulties in accessing the employment market.

Additionally, the Government has announced the *Supporting Recovery: Mental Health Community Services Plan 2011–2017* (Supporting Recovery), to further strengthen and expand the services provided by the non-government sector. The above achievements have made a significant contribution towards delivering on Supporting Recovery Priority 3.3 – Community-based support.

Priority area 4 Coordinating care

The Queensland Government is reforming mental health to improve links between services and provide more integrated care to consumers, families and carers. Improved integration with these supports provides consumers, families and carers with the best chance of recovery from mental illness.

Summary of achievements

- invested \$4.7 million in care co-ordination
- established and recruited 20 service integration coordinators to facilitate more seamless care to consumers across primary health, housing, employment, disability and mental health services

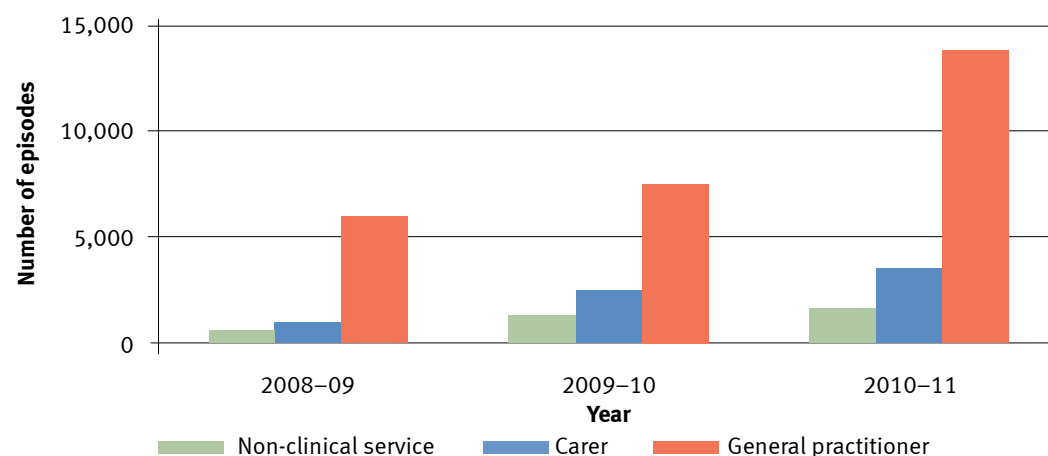
Care co-ordination

As part of the plan, the Queensland Government has established and recruited more than 20 service integration co-ordinators. These staff work to assist consumers with a severe mental illness, persistent symptoms and complex needs and who are at risk of falling through the gaps, have lost social and family support networks and rely extensively on multiple health and community services for assistance to maintain their lives in the community. Service integration co-ordinators work in partnership with government, non-government and private sector organisations, to connect consumers to services that will meet their needs.

Linking mental health care to community care

Since 2008–09*, there has been a steady increase in the number of identified mental health consumers with community supports such as carers, other non-clinical services, and general practitioners. In particular, liaison with GPs is important, to ensure integrated, continuous and well co-ordinated mental health care.

Figure 5 Community service episodes[^] with identified third party contact in Queensland, 2008–09 to 2010–11



Source: Consumer Integrated Mental Health Application (CIMHA), Queensland Health

Note 1^{*}: As CIMHA commenced on 17 November 2008, 2008–09 data is not available from 1 July 2008 to 16 November 2008.

Note 2[^]: A community service episode is a period of contact between a consumer and clinical community-based mental health service, which has discrete start and end points. It is defined as a more or less continuous period of contact.

Priority area 5

Workforce, information, quality and safety

The Queensland Government has invested in initiatives that will improve the skills of mental health workers and improve access to mental health information. This investment supports services to provide high quality, safe and evidence-based mental health care.

Summary of achievements

- invested more than \$70 million towards workforce, information, quality and safety
- increased training and strengthened the role for the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning
- Invested approximately \$10 million into the development of the non-government sector and workforce
- established a new clinical information system

Improved training

The Queensland Government has established a specialist unit, the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning (QCMHL), to improve the skills and knowledge of mental health workers. Over the last four years, nearly 7,000 Queensland Health staff have undertaken training through QCMHL. More than 2,000 staff now receive training through the centre each year, compared to 200 in 2006–07.

The Queensland Government has also funded training in:

- Mental Health First Aid for 653 non-government and Department of Communities staff
- ASIST (suicide prevention) for 93 non-government and Department of Communities staff
- Recovery-oriented Certificate IV in Mental Health for 22 TAFE teachers
- Mental Health Leadership and Management training for 30 non-government agency staff
- Recovery-Oriented Practice workshops for 58 government and non-government leaders.

The Government has also allocated funds to provide 400 scholarships to non-government staff to undertake the Certificate IV in Mental Health, and to employ four non-government regional sector development workers to help build the capacity of the non-government sector through linking with local government community development officers.

These achievements have made a significant contribution towards delivering on Supporting Recovery Priorities 3.6 – A valued workforce and 3.7 – Sector sustainability.

Better information

The Government has also established a new clinical information system, the Consumer Integrated Mental Health Application (CIMHA), to provide improved functionality, including secure electronic clinical notes and care plans. CIMHA merged three existing mental health information systems into a single statewide system and reduced data entry requirements, while providing clinical users with a sophisticated tool for day-to-day management of legislative and clinical processes. CIMHA also helps to ensure that any person requiring mental health care can access quality and consistent mental health services based on their individual needs.

The future

The addition of more staff and resources through the *Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007–2017* (QPMH) is ensuring the mental health system works more effectively, produces better results for consumers and contributes to improved mental health outcomes for all Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government's commitment to improving mental health services will continue. It has renewed its strong commitment to implementing the *Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007–2017* in the 2011–12 budget, through a partnership with the Australian Government. The Queensland Government has therefore allocated \$38 million to recruit 126 additional community mental health staff in public sector services, and \$10.5 million to recruit 30 community mental health positions through the non government sector. These resources will be allocated over two years to areas significantly affected by recent natural disasters, to provide specialist mental health support, individual and group support, and counselling. This budget funding is also supporting the establishment of two carer support hubs, a mental health promotion resource hub, and enhanced community coordination capacity.

In the coming years, inpatient services will also be improved with the commissioning of 300 new inpatient beds.

These increased resources will be accompanied by continuing reform activities, including improved training for our staff, better information systems and early intervention and prevention programs.

Queensland's mental health system will also face challenges in coming years, due to the impacts of recent natural disasters and economic stress from the global financial crisis. These events have placed more Queenslanders under pressures that can contribute to poorer mental health. Additionally, the Queensland population continues to grow more quickly than the rest of Australia and this may also increase demands for services.

Consequently, the Queensland Government will work closely with the Australian Government to realise the full potential of the National Partnership Agreements on Supporting National Mental Health Reform and the establishment of Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres.

Why a Mental Health Commission

Queensland's mental health system has undergone extensive expansion and reform since the National Mental Health Strategy was launched in 1992, and particularly since 2007 under the QPMH. Yet there is much more to be done, with big improvements still to be delivered under the next phase of the QPMH, and through the Australian Government's proposed 10-year roadmap for mental health reform and National Partnership Agreement on Supporting National Mental Health Reform.

Addressing the mental health needs of Queenslanders remains a key human rights challenge, one that cannot be met by Government acting alone. Nor are existing organisational arrangements within the mental health system best designed to take up this challenge.

Evidence suggests that a dedicated, stand-alone Mental Health Commission would improve the mental health system's ability to focus on the individual needs of clients and their families, and to provide more effective and co-ordinated services, ranging from acute care hospital services, to community-based and non-government services. It would also provide for more transparency in the allocation of resources, and accountability for the results achieved. The Commission would promote greater use of research and evaluation to inform future investment in mental health. Mental Health Commissions operate, or are being established, in several Australian jurisdictions and overseas.

Establishment of a Queensland Mental Health Commission will support further transformation of the mental health system and better responses to emerging priorities, pressures and opportunities. As an independent body, the Commission will provide strong leadership and advocacy, and aid the recognition of mental health as one of our most critical challenges.

The Commission will be well placed to promote the recovery and human rights of people with mental illness, taking into account the full spectrum of issues impacting on mental health and mental illness. It will play pivotal roles in policy development and in the direction of funding, and will focus on streamlining the mental health system, rather than adding another layer of bureaucracy.

The Queensland Government remains committed to ongoing reform and development towards the plan's 10 year vision of an improved and stronger system of mental health care in Queensland.

Feedback and contact details

We welcome your feedback on the *Four Year Report on the Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007–2017*.

Please send your feedback to **MHIU-admin@health.qld.gov.au** or contact:

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