

MORLEY ADULT MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Grievance

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [9.23 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Mental Health. I say at the outset that this may not be a grievance as such; it may be more of a request for reassurance on behalf of some of the more vulnerable members of my electorate of Morley. I recently received a letter from the Health Services Union on behalf of its members employed in health professional, technical and clinical capacities at the Morley Adult Mental Health Centre and also on behalf of the mental health patients or clients who use the Morley clinic. The letter expressed concern about certain aspects of the recently announced closure of the facility in Morley. As part of the clinical services planning redesign, the Morley Adult Mental Health Centre will relocate its services within the next six months to the community mental health facilities in the inner city, Mirrabooka and Swan areas. The clinic is now scheduled to be closed at the end of the current lease in July 2010.

The plan to relocate the Morley clinic and all its existing staff is part of a redesign project to ensure that the catchment areas in the North Metropolitan Area Health Service's adult mental health program are consistent with the catchment areas of other large government departments and local shires. It forms part of the clinical planning process working towards more integrated care. This is based on data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to ensure that resources are shared equitably. Currently, 297 consumers attend the Morley clinic, with only 56 local consumers attending the service. A total of 114 consumers who are utilising this clinic live in the Swan clinic area, 25 consumers who are utilising this clinic live in the Mirrabooka clinic area, and 145 consumers who are utilising this clinic live in the inner city clinic area.

Morley was set up in 2000 as a satellite of the Swan clinic. The Morley facility is not comprehensive, and a large proportion of the 297 patients already go to other centres for some of their care. For instance, they already go to the Swan clinic for any emergency or acute services. Furthermore, the Department of Health already provides community services in the area in the form of home visits and outreach care. I understand that there have been a lot of complaints about the facilities at Morley and that, in this context, the relocation is a move for the benefit of the consumers of mental health care. It will improve the services offered to them. However, the members of the Health Services Union who are employed at the Morley clinic are understandably concerned about the security of their jobs and are also concerned about the possible disadvantages imposed on the mental health patients who currently use the facility.

Can the minister reassure staff of the Morley Adult Mental Health Centre that none of them will lose their jobs in the relocation process? With respect to the mental health clients who currently attend the Morley clinic, can the minister confirm that no patient will be left without services in the interim and beyond, and that individual patients will have their own transitional care plan worked out for them based on their specific needs? Furthermore, can the minister reassure patients that they will remain with the same doctors and case managers? Finally, there have also been rumours that the Mirrabooka option is no longer on the table and that the clinic there is also scheduled for closure. Can the minister confirm or deny that these rumours are true?

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre — Minister for Mental Health) [9.28 am]: I thank the member for Morley for his grievance. Some of the answers to his questions have been provided by him in his grievance. It is fair to say that we have had some discussion about this. The concerns of the member for Maylands have also been discussed. My office and the Mental Health Commission have provided her with a personal briefing because her constituents also are involved. She has obviously had representation from concerned people, as has the member for Morley.

The two very important questions for me in the relocation of the Morley Adult Mental Health Centre are: will anybody be disadvantaged in the provision of services; and, will they be able to access the alternatives that have been suggested? The Morley Adult Mental Health Centre is relocating its services at the end of July this year. The facility itself is not government owned and is small. In fact, it is the smallest mental health clinic and does not provide a broad range of specialist mental health programs that can be provided at other sites. As the member for Morley rightly points out, when we identified who attended the clinic, where they lived and where they came from, it was found that of the 295 consumers, or clients, within the Morley catchment area, 25 already go to Mirrabooka, 145 go to the inner city, 114 go to Swan and 11 go to other sites. However, the consumers who live in the suburb of Morley who attended this clinic number 56. Therefore, about a quarter of the total number actually live in Morley.

It is important that the provision of services is not downsized. Morley consumers will be provided with all the community mental health services that are provided at other sites. The inner city adds to that and provides a specific Clozapine clinic, and Mirrabooka has on-site rehabilitation services, which are not provided at Morley.

I can assure the member for Morley that there will be no job losses. This is not about putting people off and saying we do not need their services. The people who are providing the services in Morley will be relocated to these other three clinics and will continue to provide a similar service in those other locations.

The other important aspect was access to mental health services. We have done a lot of work on this because we need to be very sure that people can access the services. One issue in providing a mental health service is to avoid providing a clinic with a wide range of services that no-one can actually get to. It was therefore important that we review the bus services and their access to those clinics. All consumers have been invited to forums. One has already been held and the second one will be held very shortly. A letter has been sent to each consumer explaining that the resources are being moved—they are not being cut, they are being moved. Individual concerns, as the member for Morley has elucidated, may be raised with the treating doctor or the case manager. It is important that consumers know that they will have the same case manager and the same doctor, if at all possible. The service coordinator and the acting program manager have been available to hear individual consumers' concerns. As I have said, a wide range of services will be provided.

I have to say to the member for Morley that this has been an issue that we have considered very carefully. It is not about downsizing a service. It is about providing a wider range of services and using the best resources to provide services to people with a wide range of mental health conditions and a wide range of needs and concerns. I hope that I can reassure the member that in fact this will be a better service. It is not a downsizing of services and there will be no job losses. In fact, the people who are working in the Morley clinic will be working at the other sites and, where possible, individuals and consumers will have those same carers and workers looking after them.

I thank the member for Morley, and in her absence I thank the member for Maylands, for bringing these issues to me so that we are able to support all consumers and their families during this transition.

This relocation will in fact happen quite soon over the coming months and all staff of the clinical team will be relocated to the inner city, Mirrabooka and Swan community mental health facilities, which are all located close to public transport for ease of access.