

INQUIRY INTO THE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR QUEENSLANDERS

Ramsay Mental Health Australia Submission
February 2022
Mental Health Select Committee



**Ramsay
Mental Health**

Submission to Public Hearing

Ramsay Mental Health Australia

11 February 2022



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Ramsay Health Care, Australia's largest private hospital operator, provides quality health care including mental health care through its global network spanning 10 countries.

The organisation, which admits more than one million patients annually in Australia and employs more than 31,000 people, operates under a philosophy of *People Caring for People*.

Within Australia we operate 72 private hospitals and day surgery units, with 18 of those in Queensland spanning from Cairns in the Far North to the Tweed Border, providing greater reach to regional areas.

Ramsay Health Care delivers a comprehensive range of services throughout Queensland including medical, surgical, obstetric, mental health and rehabilitation services and admits more than 365,000 patients a year.

Our Mental Health Select Committee Recommendations

Ramsay Mental Health believes significant cost-effective ready-to-mobilise opportunities currently exist within untapped public private partnership models in Queensland for innovative care delivery.

We offer the following recommendations for the Select Committee's consideration regarding improving mental health outcomes for Queenslanders:

- Consideration be given to urgently establishing a collaborative public/private partnership to meet the increased demand for services for adolescents, young adults and adults seeking treatment for eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and addictions and substance misuse experienced since the COVID-19 pandemic. As identified in its written briefing to this inquiry (p32), this is a demand unable to be met by Queensland Health.ⁱ
- Consideration be given to trialling a workforce model to help address the workforce and direct care FTE shortfalls identified as a challenge by Queensland Health in its Inquiry briefing (p31)ⁱⁱ. A collaborative mixed staffing model has the potential to deliver immediate relief in some important areas of specialist service delivery and as being rolled out as part of the Victorian Specialist Women's Mental Health Centre.

- Consideration be given to replicating governance models already successfully operating in both Victorian and New South Wales to fast-track pilot programs with public private partnerships to ensure the potential benefits of urgent collaboration are not lost in bureaucracy.
- Consideration be given to better harnessing the service safety and quality, workforce improvement and digital capability that exists in developing pilot service delivery programs with private sector providers.
- Consideration be given to prioritising funding allocations for public private partnership programs which reduce service duplication and recognise established expertise that can be tapped to broaden the reach of care and treatment to improve patient outcomes.

Our Response to the Terms of Reference

On Thursday 2 December 2021, the Mental Health Select Committee was established to conduct an inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders and report back to the House by Tuesday 31 May 2022.

Ramsay Mental Health Australia is responding to the following aspects to the Terms of Reference in our submission to the Select Committee:

- the **economic and societal impact** of mental illness in Queensland;
- the current **needs of and impacts on the mental health service system** in Queensland;
- **opportunities to improve** economic and social participation of people with mental illness through **comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated mental health services** (including alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention)

Of particular interest to us is further discussion regarding:

- collaboration and partnership with the Queensland government and other levels of government to enhance outcomes for Queenslanders requiring mental health treatment and support through improving access to the super-specialty workforce and capital assets that Ramsay provides;
- collaboration regarding service safety and quality, workforce improvement, improved transitions through care pathways between sectors and digital capability;
- collaboration regarding public/private mental health funding models in Australia, including bundled care across our inpatient and community based programs to maximise incentives for those with a mental illness to see the spectrum of treatment they need as indicated in the National Mental Health Services Planning Framework.

Key Points

Economic and Societal Impact

Mental illness has reached epidemic proportions in Australia and solutions require collaborative and innovative approaches.

By combining our expertise and resources with the public sector in other states Ramsay Mental Health has already begun to achieve significant success in delivering mental health services to a wider range of Australians.

We have successfully collaborated with governments in public private partnerships to deliver outcomes to benefit entire communities. Ramsay Mental Health believes such partnerships are the future to providing much needed mental health assistance on a wide scale, allowing State Governments to utilise our widespread and extensive network of facilities, doctors and clinicians.

Our positive and proven track record in other states of Australia strengthens our view that there are untapped public private partnership opportunities which could have a positive economic and societal impact in Queensland.

For example, since **March 2020**, Ramsay Clinic Macarthur and Ramsay Clinic Wentworthville have held a contract with South West Sydney Local Health District to provide overnight mental health services, inclusive of ECT as required, for public patients experiencing anxiety, depression and psychosis.

In **December 2021**, Ramsay Mental Health partnered with the Victorian Government (The Alfred and Goulburn Valley Health) in a \$100 million Australian-first *Specialist Women's Mental Health Service*. The service was borne from a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system. The partnership will deliver 35 acute mental health beds in Melbourne and Shepparton specifically to support those who identify as women with a range of complex conditions, including those who have experienced trauma and sexual abuse, eating disorders and perinatal mental health concerns. If successful, it is anticipated the hub and spoke model will be introduced in other regional locations.

In **March 2022** young adults in south western Sydney will have access to increased mental health services through a public private partnership trial between NSW Health and Ramsay Health Care. The \$3 million initiative will result in additional inpatient beds provided by Ramsay Mental Health at Ramsay Clinic Macarthur for youths aged 14 to 24 who may be struggling with a range of mood, anxiety, eating disorders and complex trauma. Importantly this new model of care launches a broad range of evidence-based day services for this age category ensuring continuity with community, family and education providers. This innovative program delivers a highly collaborative public/private model to expand the reach of south western Sydney's young people's mental health services to the community.

Ramsay Mental Health data reveals an extraordinary increase in presentations to emergency departments of children and young people with increasingly complex disorders, as well as deliberate self-harm in the past 18 months.

It is through forming these strategic partnerships between the public and private sector that Ramsay Mental Health believes we can better meet the mental health needs of all Australians.

Needs Of and Impacts On The Mental Health Service System

Queensland is a large state with a substantial percentage of its population living in regional and remote locations. There is a significant maldistribution of State Government health services throughout the state.

Ramsay Mental Health is well placed to help meet the needs within those areas which are currently underserved. Our geographical spread across both metropolitan and regional areas and depth of our services means we stand ready right now to form a strategic partnership with the State Government to assist Queenslanders who are struggling with their mental health - whether that be in person in our clinics, or through our well-established Telehealth network.

Many mental health conditions emerge before the age of 25 and like all medical conditions, timely access to treatment is what can ensure the best outcomes. Many families say they struggle to obtain

appointments within the public system in a timely manner, often waiting months or having to travel well outside their local communities.

The long-running COVID-19 pandemic has put even more pressure on the mental health of Australians and Queenslanders.

One in five adult Australians experiences mental illness in any given year,ⁱⁱⁱ with one in five adolescents aged 11-17 reporting levels of psychological distress.^{iv}

In 2020-21, 15 per cent of Australians aged 16-85 years experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress, with the number of women affected (19 per cent) higher than men (12 per cent).^v

Young people aged 16 to 24 years' experience high or very high levels of psychological distress at more than twice the rate of those aged 65 to 85 years.^{vi}

Anxiety disorders are the most commonly reported mental health issues for young people (15 per cent) followed by substance use disorders (13 per cent) and affective disorders (6 per cent).^{vii}

Eating disorders amongst adolescents, in particular, have increased substantially since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.^{viii}

More than 80 per cent of eating disorders have their onset in youth with treatment more effective within the first three years.^{ix}

In Australia there has been an almost doubling of urgent and routine referrals for child and adolescent eating disorders services in the past year while at the same time there have been substantially higher youth mental health related presentations to primary care settings, community health services and hospitals.^x

About one million Australians or 4 per cent of the population are living with an eating disorder in any given year. While about a third of Australian adolescents engage in disordered eating behaviours within any given year.^{xi}

Ramsay Mental Health clinics have been successfully treating eating disorders and the underlying psychological factors for decades in Queensland.

Our programs provide treatment to patients with anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and other eating disorders within a safe, empathetic environment, allowing them to regain control of their life through medical, social and psychological support.

Ramsay Clinic New Farm is the only private facility in Queensland that offers a re-feeding phase in its Eating Disorder Program. We have capacity and capability that we believe should be made available to all Queenslanders who need this kind of specialist assistance.

Opportunities To Improve

Since our first clinic opened in 1964, Ramsay Mental Health has been at the forefront of providing private mental health services particularly for high prevalence disorders from depression and anxiety to addiction and eating disorders.

Government run mental health services have traditionally been established to handle the more time intensive severe low prevalence disorders including schizophrenia and other psychosis, which affect one per cent to two per cent of the adult population.

Ramsay Mental Health has the programs and expertise already in place throughout Queensland to immediately form a public private partnership with the State Government to help deliver care and treatment for high prevalence disorders.

We have the beds available; we have the clinics operational to best practice governance standards; we have home outreach services in place; we are staffed by doctors and health practitioners who are highly qualified experts in their fields; we are well established in delivering Telehealth medicine.

In Queensland there are more than 125,000 referrals each year to the Hospital Health Service mental health community treatment services, for more than 80,000 people.^{xii}

More than 48,000 people accessed mental health community support services delivered by NGOs through more than 64,000 episodes.^{xiii}

About 3.4 per cent of Queensland's population is estimated to experience a severe mental health disorder.^{xiv}

Ramsay Mental Health Australia stands at the ready to help fill the identified mental health support service delivery void in Queensland.

Introducing Ramsay Mental Health Australia

We have a long history of providing mental health care, with our first clinic established by our founder Paul Ramsay in Sydney in 1964. Since then, we have grown to become the largest private provider of mental health services in Australia under the Ramsay Mental Health banner, operating 22 mental health units with 1,120 beds.

Our mental health facilities treat more than 70,000 inpatients each year and more than 60,000 day patients in our stepped model of care during 2021. We also have a number of outreach services providing care in the home in addition to community-based psychology services through Ramsay Psychology.

We have 370 RANZCP VMO psychiatrists credentialed to our facilities and participating in our wide range of services. We also have the Ramsay Mental Health Recruitment Hub which is an effective and robust support system to streamline psychiatrist entry and recruitment into our services to build much-needed capacity.

Our Queensland Presence



Within Queensland, Ramsay Mental Health operates six mental health facilities, with more than 300 inpatient beds – Ramsay Clinic Caloundra (47 beds), Ramsay Clinic Rockhampton (24 beds), Ramsay Clinic New Farm (128 beds), Ramsay Clinic Cairns (30 beds), Greenslopes Private Hospital (31 beds) and Ramsay Clinic Gold Coast (48 beds). In addition, there is a day clinic, Ramsay Psychology Benowa, also on the Gold Coast.

Across Queensland working in multidisciplinary teams, we have expertise in a broad range of mental health conditions including mood and anxiety disorders, addictions, psychosis, post-natal depression, eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder across the age spectrum - adolescents to seniors. We also have significant experience in the treatment of veterans with PTSD.

Ramsay has recently expanded its community-based presence with five community mental health practices opening in Queensland operating under the Ramsay Psychology banner at Fortitude Valley, Ipswich, Southport, Maroochydore and Coorparoo, with more to come in regional areas in the next two years. This provides a clear, integrated care pathway and multiple settings for care based on patient need where patients can step-up and step-down in intensity of care setting dependent upon their circumstances.

Our Unrivalled Expertise

Ramsay Mental Health provides a broad range of mental health treatment options through its highly skilled workforce of psychiatrists and psychologists, via inpatient services, day clinics, outreach programs, community psychology services and outpatient services as well as Telehealth.

Ramsay Mental Health has a comprehensive range of programs treating all diagnostic categories. We have also made a significant investment to grow our reputation and clinical expertise in the treatment of eating disorders, adolescents and young adults. We are the largest private provider of these services nationally, in addition to being the largest private provider of substance misuse programs.

We are strong advocates of professional development and training and partner with renowned universities delivering globally recognised teaching programs. We offer new doctors access to our purpose designed eating disorders training program and are proud to work with some of the leading experts in the field, including Associate Professor Sloane Madden, a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist recognised for his expertise in eating disorders and child & adolescent services and leading this training program.

A/Prof Madden has more than 20 years' experience in this highly specialised field and is one of Australia's foremost researchers. He has published more than 100 peer reviewed scientific articles and abstracts on the subject including the treatment of anorexia nervosa, early onset eating disorders and the neurobiology of eating disorders.

Ramsay Mental Health also is privileged to collaborate with Warren Ward, an Associate Professor at The University of Queensland who has held the position of Director, Queensland Eating Disorders Service (QuEDS) since 2005. He is also the Chair of the Queensland Health Eating Disorder Advisory Group, co-author of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry (RANZCP) Clinical Practice Guidelines for Eating Disorders and is working with Ramsay Clinic New Farm to expand the eating disorders service.

Our expert team of adolescent, young adult and eating disorders psychiatrists also includes Associate Professor John Kasinathan, experienced in providing psychiatric assessment and treatment for children, adolescents and adults. He is the Medical Director of Ramsay Mental Health's Adolescent and Young Adult Service in Sydney and was previously clinical leader for the high-secure Adolescent Unit in the Forensic Hospital, the first unit of its kind in Australia. A/Prof Kasinathan provides expert clinical governance in the management of services for this age category.

An additional strength of Ramsay Mental Health is our Greenslopes Private Hospital teaching and research centre, well recognised as a leader in the private health care sector in Australia. It is the only private hospital to have a fully-fledged clinical school on campus with an emphasis on both undergraduate and postgraduate training of the future medical, nursing and allied health workforce.

Our Research Investment

Ramsay Mental Health aims to be not just at the forefront of treatment, but also the forefront of research into mental illness in Australia.

Our doctors and clinicians have been involved in a significant number of major research projects into mental health issues through the [Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation](#) which was established in 2017 to enhance healthcare delivery and improve patient outcomes.

Across Australia, Ramsay Health Care is participating in more than 1,000 clinical trials and research projects involving 27,000 patients.

Throughout our history, we have been guided by a mission to provide better outcomes for our patients, to investigate the diseases and illnesses which affect them and to progress the learning and development of those who care for them, this includes mental illness.

In 2021, we launched an extensive new grants program supported by the [Paul Ramsay Foundation](#) with \$4 million of funding available every year over a five-year period.

Recent research in the mental health field includes a [world-first genetic study into depression](#). The aim of this ongoing study is to investigate the roles of genes and clinical factors in the large numbers of clinically well-assessed patients being treated for depression at Ramsay facilities.

In Queensland, *Ramsay Clinic New Farm* has been participating in a study of patients treated for major depression. The Text Me Well study is analysing whether a text messaging program can help reduce depressive symptoms and improve other health outcomes in conjunction with standard treatments. The clinical trial is designed to deliver text messages after inpatient treatment. The messages provide advice, motivation and support to maintain mental wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle post discharge. If the study is shown to be successful, the project is likely to become the standard of care for all patients following discharge from a Ramsay Mental Health facility. The study has significant potential as a low-cost, safe and simple method to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of patients with a major depressive disorder after they are discharged from inpatient care.

Greenslopes Private Hospital and *Ramsay Clinic New Farm* doctors were also involved in a research project on patients with post-traumatic stress disorder. The Ramsay Adapt project investigated anxiety and depression in cancer patients and evaluated the implementation of a clinical pathway into routine care at Ramsay hospitals. If successful, the research will pave the way for the establishment of a sustainable model of treatment across Ramsay Health Care hospitals as well as community-based care. *Greenslopes Private Hospital*, through its strong ties to the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF), also supports veteran mental health research. Solutions in this space include a veteran reintegration study, civilian readiness study, veteran sleep therapy study, quality use of medication study and families with a veteran study.

Our Global Network

We have become a global leader in providing mental health services and are continuing to expand our operations in response to unprecedented demand world-wide.

To this end, in December Ramsay Health Care bought the UK's largest mental health services group, Elysium Healthcare for \$1.4 billion.

Elysium Healthcare operates 72 sites across England and Wales and about 2000 beds in Britain, where the mental health sector is growing at around 4 per cent annually, faster than the broader healthcare market. It works closely with the UK government's National Health Service.

Elysium's specialist services will bring an added dimension to Ramsay Mental Health's services through a range of acute/complex care, outpatient, rehabilitation and community care for public and private patients.

In Europe, Ramsay Santé, a 52.5 per cent owned subsidiary of Ramsay Health Care, is the second largest private care provider, operating specialist clinics and primary care units in about 350 locations across five countries.

In France, Ramsay Santé has 132 acute care and mental health facilities while in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, it operates 210 facilities including primary care.

Conclusion

We welcome the opportunity to meet with the Select Committee to provide further insight into the ways Ramsay Mental Health, in partnership with Queensland Health, could mobilise innovative solutions to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely,



Anne Mortimer

Director

Ramsay Mental Health Australia

ⁱ <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/com/MHSC-1B43/IQ-5DEF/220114%20-%20Queensland%20Health%20written%20brief.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/com/MHSC-1B43/IQ-5DEF/220114%20-%20Queensland%20Health%20written%20brief.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/first-insights-national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing-2020-21>

^{iv} <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/mental-illness>

^v <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/first-insights-national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing-2020-21>

^{vi} <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/first-insights-national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing-2020-21>

^{vii} <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/mental-illness>

^{viii} <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00048674211054743>

^{ix} <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00048674211054743>

^x <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00048674211054743>

^{xi} <https://nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/the-facts/eating-disorders-in-australia/>

^{xii} https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/465131/connecting-care.pdf

^{xiii} https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/465131/connecting-care.pdf

^{xiv} https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/465131/connecting-care.pdf