



ACT
Government

Secure Mental Health Unit Preliminary Sketch Plans

Record of Consultation

(14 May 2014 to 18 June 2014)

This report was produced by the Health Infrastructure Program communications team in collaboration with the Secure Mental Health Unit project team and Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services.

For further information email: HIP@act.gov.au

Background

A Preliminary Sketch Plan (PSP) is produced during a building's design phase and provides a progressive illustration of what the final building may look like. The PSP is further developed in consultation with stakeholders and becomes more detailed as it progresses toward the Final Sketch Plan (FSP) stage.

In December 2013, during community consultation on the draft Model of Care for the Secure Mental Health Unit (SMHU) ACT Health committed to presenting key elements of the SMHU PSP for community comment.

On Wednesday, 14 May 2014 the SMHU PSP was publically released, commencing a consultation period that closed on Wednesday, 18 June 2014.

Some parts of the PSP were not made available for public viewing. These included details of internal layout and anything that might compromise the secure nature of the facility.

Community and stakeholder engagement

Key stakeholders and interested members of the community were provided with an opportunity to view artist impressions and plans showing the overall layout and presentation of the SMHU. The PSP was made available on the ACT Government's *Time to Talk* consultation website.

A community information session about the plans was held at the Hellenic Club, Woden on Wednesday, 21 May 2014. The session was facilitated by Dr Norman Swan, ABC Health Presenter and included a Q&A panel discussion.

The opportunity to attend the community information session and to provide comment on the SMHU PSP was promoted through:

- local media coverage of a press release issued by the ACT Chief Minister that publically released the PSP and invited comment;
- press advertising (ACT Government Community Noticeboard in the Canberra Times; Chronicle; City News; and Canberra Weekly);
- posters on public noticeboards in shopping centres in Red Hill, Narrabundah, Griffith, Manuka as well as the main foyer of Canberra Hospital;
- a project newsletter distributed to households in Red Hill, Narrabundah, Griffith and Symonston within 1.5kms of the site for the SMHU. The newsletter was also provided to mental health staff and consumer/carer stakeholders;
- social media (ACT Health Twitter and Facebook);
- an update of the SMHU project page on the Health Infrastructure Program section of the ACT Health website;
- 'all staff' email and an internal news bulletin article for ACT Health staff; and
- A Whole-of-Government message to ACT Public Service staff.

Prior to the commencement of community consultation on the SMHU PSP, senior ACT Health executives, accompanied by the SMHU architect, met face-to-face with neighbours directly opposite the facility. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the PSP and to answer questions about where the SMHU will sit on the site and what it will look like. The face-to-face meeting also provided advance notice of the upcoming community information session.

An offer of a similar meeting to the above was made to the Inner South Canberra Community Council and other neighbours near the site.

During the consultation period, members of the project team also met with the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network and the United Ngunnawal Elders Council to discuss the PSP.

All material produced to support the community consultation period advised stakeholders and interested members of the community that comments could be emailed to: HIP@act.gov.au or sent to: Secure Mental Health Unit Project, PO Box 11, Woden ACT 2606

The consultation period closed on Wednesday, 18 June 2014.

Community information session

During the consultation period a community information session was held on Wednesday 21 May 2014 at the Hellenic Club in Woden. The session attracted an audience of just under 40 people comprising a mix of employees of ACT Health, mental health sector workers, consumer and carer representatives, a Canberra Times journalist and residents living near the site of the facility.

The information session was facilitated by Dr Norman Swan. It included:

- An introduction and overview of mental health services and facilities in the ACT by Katrina Bracher, Executive Director, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services;
- A presentation about the SMHU by Dr Peter Norrie, ACT Chief Psychiatrist;
- A description and guide through the PSP by Ms Katherine Longhurst, Perumal Pedavoli Architect; and
- A presentation of mental health consumer experiences by Ms Dannielle Nagle, Secure Mental Health Unit Model of Care Project Officer.

The session offered an opportunity for attendees to seek further information about the facility and to ask questions of the presenters.

Comments made and questions asked of the presenters during the information session related to:

- a perceived lack of consultation and perception that a decision had already been made prior to consultation concerning the site selection process;
- studies undertaken and considerations made in regard to the security of neighbours to the site;
- the level of visibility of security at the facility and whether guards will be provided by ACT Health or a security firm;
- the level of funding allocated to the project;
- the lighting surrounding the perimeter fencing and what impact the lighting would have on the native wildlife;

- what 'classification' or type of person would use the facility and how 'forensic' people would be separated from 'civil' people;
- a suggestion that that the facility should be only for detainees transferred directly from the Alexander Maconochie Centre;
- a request for a detailed map to be added to future SMHU project newsletters;
- a concern about the title of the newsletter, including the phrase 'community consultation', when there was a perceived lack of consultation;
- what rates of escape from the facility are expected and how these align with similar facilities in other jurisdictions;
- the operation of 'staff zones' and how staff will mix with people admitted to the facility;
- the planned number of beds and the opinion that the facility will not have enough beds for what is required in the ACT;
- the length of stay and follow up care when back in the community;
- why the need for a new facility and the impact on already existing mental health services provided within the ACT;
- the level of security of the existing Adult Mental Health Unit;
- the misbelief that the existing Adult Mental Health Unit it is meant to be 'secure' and the question of how this new facility will be more secure so that people will be unable to get out.

The Q&A panel discussion also took two questions on notice. The first was a question about whether the land value of surrounding properties had been looked at or considered and whether land value will decrease as a result of the development of this new facility.

ACT Health is not in a position to comment on land values, in particular any shift in valuation which may or may not occur as a direct result of ongoing development in the immediate area.

The project team can advise that anecdotal evidence in other jurisdictions suggests that property values do not appear to be impacted as a result of proximity to secure mental health facilities.

The second question on notice related to the gross floor area/total square metres of the facility. The gross floor area, excluding outbuildings, is 3741sqm.

Feedback register

Feedback on the SMHU PSP was received through formal submissions and through comments at the public information session.

The Health Infrastructure Program received 12 formal submissions via the HIP@act.gov.au mailbox.

Whilst there remains a level of angst from some members of the community about the site selection process, overall comments on the PSP were supportive of the new facility with most of the comments received simply seeking further information or clarification.

The following table provides a register of feedback themes and the project team's response to comments and queries.

Theme/subject	Comment/query	Project team response
Admissions	Seeking clarification on a statement that 98% of admissions would come from the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).	Noted that whilst a large proportion of people using the facility may come from the AMC, the new unit will also accommodate people from the broader community. It is very difficult to offer an exact percentage for the origins of consumers who may present to the facility in the future.
Capacity	Question about how can it be justified to develop such a facility for 8 to 9 people when it opens in 2016.	The facility is a 25 bed unit and has been planned to meet demand into 2022 and beyond.
	Question about a plan to build a second facility in a different location should the requirement exceed the 25 bed capacity of this facility.	Confirmed that there is currently no plan to build a second facility in a different location. The capacity of the proposed facility is expected to exceed current demand projections.
	Question about whether the ACT Government will have to enact more 'special legislation' in the future to build another facility elsewhere in Canberra or expand this facility.	The new facility has been planned to meet projected demand and will not need to be duplicated.
	Comment that MLA Steve Doszpot has stated in a letterbox drop in Red Hill that the SMHU will be 40 beds, not 25 and questioning who to believe.	Confirmed that the SMHU will be a 25 bed facility.
Custodial setting vs health care setting	Seeking clarification on a statement that people would be 'allowed out on weekends'.	There are occasions when people may be granted leave, either for compassionate or therapy reasons. Leave for compassionate reasons (eg to attend a family funeral) will be considered and granted with very specific conditions. Leave for therapy purposes will follow a graduated process of escorted and unescorted ground leave, and then even more graduated escorted and unescorted off-grounds leave.

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	Question about how consistent the rights of “consumers” under a custodial sentence are with other incarcerated “consumers” while they are in the SMHU.	Confirmed that when a person with a need for inpatient mental health care is transferred from a prison setting to the SMHU ACT Health will assume legal custody. They remain under the same custodial sentencing conditions that are applicable to them when they are in the custody of ACT Corrections.
Design – including Environmental Sustainability	Comment on the need for sunshine in outdoor areas and question on what type of heating would be installed in outdoors areas for winter months.	Confirmed that outdoors areas make best use of available sunshine and that the type of outdoor heater to be used would be determined in the Final Sketch Plan stage.
	Question about how the environmental impacts will be assessed and minimised.	Confirmed that recommendations from a comprehensive Site Investigation Report undertaken in 2013 have been used to guide the preliminary design of the facility. The report includes investigations into environmental impact associated with the project.
	Question about how will the amenity of the facility, such as lighting, be designed to have minimal or no impact on the flora and fauna in close proximity of the site.	Confirmed that recommendations from the above-mentioned Site Investigation Report have been used to plan the facility’s external lighting to minimise lighting spill and impact on flora and fauna in close proximity.
	Question about why the ‘Acute Wing’ isn’t being located at the back of the complex and as far from neighbouring homes as possible.	Confirmed that direct access to external areas located at the rear of the facility, which maximise solar access, is greater for people in the Rehabilitation Wing than it is for the Acute Wing, hence the location of the Acute Wing.
	Comment that bedroom windows look very small.	Confirmed that window sizes shown in the PSP are a guide only. Final window sizes will be determined during the next design phase.

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	Comment that external courtyards should provide places to sit and relax and reflect – not just benches on the edges of pathways.	Noted. This comment will be referred to the landscape architect for consideration during the next design phase.
	Question about whether there would be a water feature in the garden.	Confirmed that there is currently no water feature planned. This comment will be referred to the landscape architect for consideration during the next design phase.
	Question from the United Ngunnawal Elders Council about whether a water feature could be included near the rehabilitation yarnning circle.	Confirmed that there is currently no water feature planned. This comment will be referred to the landscape architect for consideration during the next design phase.
Health and wellbeing	Questions about whether the design allowed for indoor and outdoor exercise facilities; space to conduct healthy cooking activities; areas for art therapy; and an outside garden area.	Confirmed that the design does allow for both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.
	Question about the availability of TV, computer and gaming facilities for younger people.	Confirmation provided that the design does allow for these facilities, but noting that the facility is not specifically for younger people.
	Comment on the value of leisure activities and the benefits of volunteer involvement in mental health facilities.	Acknowledged.
	Question about whether the new facility would be smoke-free.	Confirmed that the campus would be smoke-free, in line with ACT Health policy.
Infection control	Internal enquiry from ACT Health's Infection Control section seeking greater detail than shown on the publically released plans and seeking confirmation of when they would need to have more involvement in the design work.	Opportunity provided to Infection Control to be involved in the development of the Final Sketch Plan stage.
Interior design	Comment on the need for quality furniture and interior finishings.	Noted.

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	Suggestions to consult young people, including interior design students, on the design.	To be considered more closely during Final Sketch Plan stage.
Memorials	Suggestion for a low key memorial, such as planting a tree, in the name of a former client of the Quamby Youth Detention Centre.	To be considered at a later stage pending an approach directly from the family involved.
Parking and traffic	Question about car parking assessment and the number of likely vehicles and vehicle access.	Confirmed that an assessment of the number of vehicles has been undertaken and continues to be developed.
	Question about what is being planned in regard to widening of Mugga Lane and how much this will add to the cost of the project?	Noted that specific details of the requirements for road works will be determined by Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and will be broadly communicated as a part of the DA process. Costs cannot be finalised until the exact scope of work has been defined and a public tender process has been undertaken.
Praise	Commending the ACT government for their commitment to improving mental health facilities.	Noted.
	Commending the design of the Adult Mental Health Unit, but acknowledging that opinions differ and the design of the new facility would need to recognise the 'sick nature of the customers'.	Acknowledged.
	Comment from the United Ngunnawal Elders Council that they are supportive of the aims of the SMHU.	Noted.
	Comment from the United Ngunnawal Elders Council that they are supportive of the inclusion of 'yarning circles' in the PSP.	Noted.
Site selection, site suitability	Comments on a perceived lack of consultation surrounding the past site selection process.	Noted.

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and development process	Comments on dissatisfaction with the tabling of the <i>Land Development (Symonston Mental Health Facility) Amendment Bill 2014</i> .	Noted.
	Comment on the topography and size of the site and their impact on design and future expansion.	Confirmed that these issues have been considered by the architect.
	Comment about the proximity of the weekend detention centre and previous statements that the SMHU should not be located near a jail, despite the architect having recent experience on a secure mental health facility located beside a jail.	Noted. Confirmed that different jurisdictions have different requirements in regard to location of a facility's proximity to correctional facilities.
Size and cost	Question about costs of demolition and earthworks.	Final cost of demolition and earthworks will be determined following a public tender process to identify a suitably qualified contractor to undertake the works.
Support services	Question about inclusion of office space for support services such as Directions ACT and whether Directions ACT had been consulted.	<p>Confirmed that there are no offices dedicated to specific organisations or services.</p> <p>Acknowledged the importance of effective links between the unit and non-government educational, vocational and rehabilitative agencies.</p> <p>Noted that Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA), the peak body representing the non-government and government alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) sector, has been directly consulted and that Directions ACT has been provided opportunity to comment.</p>

Theme/subject	Comment/query	Project team response
	Comment from the United Ngunnawal Elders Council that there needs to be a dedicated Aboriginal Health Worker, especially if any under 18s are admitted.	Confirmed that the development of the SMHU Workforce Plan is due to commence later in 2014 and that the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders would be reflected in the plan.
Visitor facilities	Comment on the need for more private breakout areas for visitors.	Confirmed that the plan incorporates a secured private courtyard area for use by family members visiting people using the service. This area is accessible directly from a visitor lounge area which incorporates a play area for children.
	Comment on the need for lockers for visitors.	The preliminary design does provide facilities specifically for this purpose.

Next steps

Although there remains some opposition to the site for the new facility, and concerns about consultation during site selection process, in general the design plans were well received by most stakeholders.

The comments received during the consultation period are welcomed and valued by the project team and will be used to guide the development of the Final Sketch Plan, prior to the lodgment of a Development Application in the second half of 2014.