



09-073, 5 June 2009

NEW MENTAL HEALTH ACT FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

I am pleased to announce that the Mental Health Bill 2008 was passed by State Parliament on Wednesday, 3 June 2009.

The Bill which was based on “Paving the Way”, the review of mental health legislation in South Australia led by Ian Bidmeade, will facilitate reform of the way mental health services are delivered in South Australia.

The Bill will become the Mental Health Act 2009 when it is assented to by the Governor of South Australia and will facilitate the following reforms to the mental health system:

- Establishment of limited treatment centres in country South Australia. For the first time, country residents will be able to be admitted and treated on an order for up to seven days, preventing unnecessary transfers to Adelaide and enabling them to remain closer to their local communities.
- Medical practitioners and authorised health professionals will be able to make both level 1 community treatment orders and level 1 detention and treatment orders enabling more timely and increased access to mental health services.
- Establishment of the statutory position of Chief Psychiatrist with the power to monitor and review standards of care.

- Providing the power for mental health staff to transport people with a mental illness, or those who appear to have a mental illness for an assessment. These provisions will reduce the role of the South Australian Police in the transportation of people with mental illness. The Memorandum of Understanding between SA Health, SAPOL, South Australian Ambulance Service and the Royal Flying Doctor Service will be revised to reflect the new Act.

Policy and Legislation in PIGR Division and the Mental Health Unit worked closely together to develop and progress the Bill. The cooperation and contributions of SA Health staff and those of the South Australian Police and the Attorney General's Department including the Guardianship Board and the Public Advocate are appreciated. Non government organisations have been very supportive of the Bill and also contributed to its development.

DR TONY SHERBON
Chief Executive

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