

MEDIA RELEASE

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RESEARCH FUNDING FOR NEW BRISBANE MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

A proposed mental health supported accommodation project that aims to take the pressure off acute care wards in North Brisbane hospitals has received almost \$200,000 in research funding.

Affordable housing provider BHC is leading the project in partnership with the Metro North Hospital Health Service (MNHHS) and various non-government health organisations.

The North Brisbane Partners in Recovery (PiR) Innovation Fund – an Australian Government initiative – has funded initial research into the project's location, model and design.

BHC Independent Chair Professor John McAuliffe said the accommodation would provide early treatment that reduced admissions to acute facilities, and follow-up support for patients transitioning from the hospital to home.

"The project would be built near an existing hospital and follow a 'Step Up, Step Down' model aimed at linking acute and community care and improve health outcomes for consumers," Professor McAuliffe said.

"We're committed to developing a financially viable model that meets the resources and needs of North Brisbane, takes pressure off acute health care workers and ultimately frees up State Government funds for other projects.

"The PiR funding will allow us to work with stakeholders – including service providers and consumers – to evaluate existing 'Step Up, Step Down' models and facilities and assess potential locations.

"We're also looking to craft a model that could be applied to other parts of Brisbane, Queensland and around Australia."

The funding announcement is timely, with Mental Health Week – a national event that aims to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the wider community – set to start on Sunday.

The research report and recommendations are expected to be finalised by July next year.

Professor McAuliffe said collaboration with Government acute care mental health providers and project partners Open Minds, Communitify and Footprints was at the core of the proposal.

"These partnerships will maximise the project's access to expertise and networks in community-based mental health care," said Professor McAuliffe.

“We look forward to working with these organisations to contribute to mental health care reform in Brisbane.”

North Brisbane PiR is a specialised initiative that seeks to improve outcomes for people who experience severe and persistent mental illness, and also have complex needs.

ENDS.

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