Australian
Private Hospitals
Association

Purpose

The Psychiatry Committee comprises a representative from each State and is chaired by the Psychiatry representative on the APHA Council. In addition to its advice to the APHA Board, the Committee also provides input to APHA's representatives on the Private Psychiatric Hospitals Data Reporting and Analysis Service (PPHDRAS). The Committee has a national focus of advocacy and policy development on behalf of private mental health facilities. Committee members are drawn from hospitals with both independent and group ownership.

The State of Psychiatry in Australia

The 2023 National Report Card published by the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) noted that in 2020-2022, just over 1 in 5 people (21.5%) in Australia aged 16-85 years experienced a mental disorder in the previous 12 months. This represents a very significant section of the population.

Mental healthcare in Australia is under immense strain from significant underfunding and workforce shortages that are unable to keep pace with rising caseloads and an increasing complexity of cases. These challenges are crippling the national health system and the ability of the public and private sectors to continue to serve all those that need care.

The 2024 financial health check undertaken by the Department of Health and Aged Care highlighted declining mental health as a critical concern for the government and the viability of private hospitals. Despite providing 61% of all separations for mental health in 2023-24, the ever increasing pressure has brought the sector to its breaking point.

Priorities

The APHA Psychiatry Committee considers and engages with a number of matters including:
- Funding for psychiatric hospitals
- Workforce shortages
- Resignations of psychiatrists from the public system
- Lived Experience Australia
- The Private Psychiatric Hospital Data Reporting and Analysis Service (PPHDRAS)
- Telehealth services
- Ambulatory care in private psychiatric hospitals

Chair
Ms Christine Gee, AM
Director, Ramsay Mental Health Australia