



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Peter Cain on 17 November 2023: Mr Peter Muir, ACT Official Visitors, took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 17 November 2023 [page no 9-10]

In relation to: Annual report p11

THE CHAIR: We will go straight to questions. The Mental Health Official Visitors reported that they had received complaints relating to the staff response to a suicide attempt. That is your annual report on page 11.

The annual report references a suicide attempt under the mental health section of the report. Are you able to share more details about that such as the circumstances around it and if procedures and policies are being modified to improve response to the situation in the future?

Mr Muir: Just for the committee's reference, I have only just taken over as the chair, about a month ago, so if we could take that question on notice and we will come back to you.

ACT Official Visitors: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

Consumer X is in their early twenties who requested to speak with an Official Visitor for Mental Health (OVMH) at the Adult Mental Health Unit – Canberra Hospital. During this discussion Consumer X complained that staff had not managed their threat/attempt to commit suicide seriously. They claimed that staff were not interested in their welfare and had not acted on their threats to harm themselves. Consumer X has a complex mental health diagnosis. During the conversation with the OVMH Consumer X was noted to be psychiatrically unwell.

Upon investigation with clinical and management staff, the OVMH was informed that this behaviour was consistent with their previous admissions and previous complaints made by the consumer about their care. That is, the current behaviour for Consumer X was not out of character from their usual baseline.

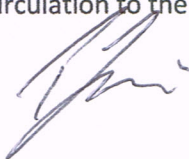
The OVMH then examined the management plan put in place to ensure that Consumer X was safe and being managed appropriately. The plan was found to be comprehensive, contained appropriate referrals and clinical interventions and was focused on Consumer X's safety.

Consumer X was followed up by the OVMH in the next fortnight, had no complaints to make about their care or treatment and was much more lucid and oriented than they had been when they first made their complaint. They had been returned to the low dependency unit and was no longer expressing suicidal ideation with plans being made for their ultimate discharge with community support.

It was considered by the OVMH that their care and treatment was appropriate in the circumstances. Staff followed all policies and procedures appropriately and the complaint was closed. This matter did not require any modification to policies and procedures in response to the complaint as all existing policies and procedures were implemented and met the consumer's needs.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 27 November 2023

By Mr Peter Muir, Chair of the Official Visitors Board, ACT Official Visitors