

Ms Tanya Bosch
Director, Budget Estimates
Room 812
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Bosch

I refer to your letter of 21 December 2004 regarding questions taken on notice during the Budget Estimates Hearing on 20 December 2004.

A question from Reverend the Hon. Dr Gordon Moyes MLC was taken on notice concerning the number of adolescents and children in adult psychiatric beds during the past year.

Young people may be admitted to an adult psychiatric unit for a number of reasons, for example they may be at immediate risk of self harm or harm to others or they may not be able to be clinically managed in a safe community setting. Admissions to psychiatric units are based on a clinical assessment of patient need and the involuntary admission requirements prescribed in the Mental Health Act. In all circumstances, the particular needs of young people in adult wards are assessed and access to child and adolescent mental health staff and increased staffing ratio/supervision is provided as required.

The Centre for Mental Health has advised that as at 13 January 2005, data from the admitted patient collection of 2003/04 indicates that there were 546 separations of young people aged 0-17 from NSW hospitals where the episode of care included at least one overnight bed-day in an adult psychiatric unit.

I can advise that 64% of child and adolescent separations from adult psychiatric unit beds in 2003-04 were patients aged 17.

Of the total separations of young people aged 0-17, there were only five admissions of children aged 0 to 11.

Please note that the number of separations reported excludes Redbank House at Westmead Hospital and Gnakulun at Campbelltown Hospital as it is not possible to separate their adolescent/child data from the adult statistics.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Kruk
Director General