

HACSU Urgency Resolution – ALP State Conference, May 20 2017

Stop the Closure of Eastern View Ballarat Community Care Unit

Conference notes with concern the Andrews Government's closure of the Eastern View Ballarat Community Care Unit (CCU), which will lead to a reduction in beds from 55 to 35.

This CCU provides essential 24-hour clinical care and residential rehabilitation to people with severe mental illness and associated psychosocial disability who are unable to be supported in less intensive community care settings. These individuals often have complex, multiple co-morbidities, requiring a number of social and accommodation options.

Currently, clinical support is provided at the CCU for single individuals in one-bed units as well as shared support in two-bed units. It is an essential service, ensuring that consumers have the best, evidence-based treatment options available to them at their moments of greatest need.

Through its decision to close the CCU, the Andrews Government is taking away this vital treatment service from the people of Ballarat. Critically, this closure is occurring amidst a significant reduction in non-government, community mental health services due to inadequate National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding for mental health. Alternative services, such as Special Residential Services (SRS), are a wholly inadequate replacement with a number of quality defects.

This decision contravenes the 2014 Victorian ALP Platform, which states that Labor, in Government, would:

- Ensure clinical community mental health services reconfigurations do not result in a reduction in access or quality of service provision, especially for those with continuing serious mental illness.
- Ensure Community Care Units maintain their focus on providing extended treatment, the management of complex clients exiting acute and secure setting and as a back up to residential rehabilitation services.

Conference therefore calls on the Andrews Labor Government and Minister for Mental health Martin Foley:

1. To uphold the commitments made in the 2014 Victorian ALP Platform and immediately suspend the closure of the Eastern View Ballarat Community Care Unit.
2. To ensure that the people of Ballarat, like all other Victorians, have the same access to services throughout their journey to recovery.

Moved: Paul Healey

Seconded: Elizabeth Doidge