

Mental health

Conversation starters: Tony Woodyatt (QPILCH) and Ken Wade (QAI)

The Mental Health Review Tribunal (**MHRT**) reviews the validity of orders authorising involuntary mental health treatment and detention. It serves to protect vulnerable people with mental illness from arbitrary state action. Only 2.27% of patients at 10,972 MHRT hearings in 2011-12 were represented. Of the 1613 forensic matters, the AG was represented in 50.7% of cases. For comparison sake, in NSW in 2011-12, patient representation was provided in 63% of civil hearings and 98.1% of forensic hearings. In Northern Territory, 98% of all patients were represented.

Facility	# hearings	Facility	# hearings
Bayside	291	On Call	320
Belmont	44	Princess Alexandra Hospital*	908
Bundaberg*	153	Redcliffe – Caboolture	1420
Cairns	789	Rockhampton*	427
Forensic Disability Service	13	Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	374
Fraser Coast	197	Sunshine Coast	576
Gold Coast	1127	The Prince Charles Hospital*	380
Greenslopes	3	Toowong Private Hospital	21
Logan-Beaudesert	782	Toowoomba*	764
Mackay	260	Townsville*	660
Mater Children's	18	The Park-Centre for Mental Health*	788
MHRT Office	4	West Moreton*	595
New Farm Clinic	58	TOTAL	10972

* Locations at which forensic matters are more than the 14% average.

QAI receives approximately \$160k of LPITAF funding for its Mental Health Legal Service. In 2011-12 the MHLS opened 171 cases, provided 155 advices and represented at 144 MHRT hearings. Assistance is provided in any mental health matter across Queensland by specialist legal staff at QAI, with priority given to complex matters involving significant breaches of human rights. QPILCH's Mental Health Law Practice assists clients with ITO hearings throughout Queensland through a panel of trained, independent volunteers and lawyers who provide assistance and advocacy to clients with ITO hearings in the Mental Health Review Tribunal. Through this service, QPILCH assists clients to prepare for hearings, to present their views to the Tribunal and advocates on their behalf prior to and at the hearing. The MHLP was officially established in September 2012. In 2012/13 it assisted over 150 clients, the majority of these with Mental Health Act issues. The MHLP also provides civil law advice to people experiencing mental illness, for example debt, housing and administrative law issues. The MHLP also coordinates and delivers training for mental health caseworkers to assist them to better identify legal issues and make appropriate referrals to legal services.