

# FORENSICARE – STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017





# Contents

## Vision, Mission and Values

Introduction	1
Who We Are and What We Do	2
Our Achievements 2010-2014	4
The Challenges We Face	7
How We Are Going to Succeed in 2015-2017	9
Alignment with the Victorian Government's VHPF Health Priority Areas	12
Service Locations	Back Cover

### Vision

Clinical excellence and translational research enable our consumers to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives in a safer community.

### Mission

We will provide high quality, specialist clinical services that focus on the recovery of our consumers, support our workforce, build our translational research capacity and work collaboratively with our stakeholders to achieve better and safer outcomes for our consumers and the community.

### Values

Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership, Human Rights.

## Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health

Yarra Bend Road  
Fairfield 3078

Tel 61 3 9495 9100

Fax 61 3 9495 9190

[info@forensicare.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@forensicare.vic.gov.au)

ABN 32 807 323 885

[www.forensicare.vic.gov.au](http://www.forensicare.vic.gov.au)





# Introduction



**Bill Healy**  
Chair  
Victorian Institute  
of Forensic Mental Health Board



**Tom Dalton**  
CEO

Forensicare has been providing services to people with a serious mental illness in the criminal justice system since 1997. Over this time, we have sought to improve the lives of our consumers and to ensure that our services within the prison system, Thomas Embling Hospital and our community program are equivalent to those provided within the wider community.

We are now entering an exciting and challenging time in mental health in Victoria, and particularly so in forensic mental health. The introduction of the new *Mental Health Act* 2014 in the middle of last year and the increasing prisoner population have provided us with a challenges and opportunities for ongoing service enhancement. It is within this environment that we have developed our new Strategic Plan to guide Forensicare through 2015-2017.

In developing the Strategic Plan we consulted widely with our stakeholders, seeking input from government departments, consumers, criminal justice and mental health agencies, non-government organisations and staff. As we experienced when we developed our previous Strategic Plan, our stakeholders provided an insightful assessment of our performance and how the changing environment is shaping both their needs and our service delivery.

The views expressed by our stakeholders led us to critically review our existing Vision and Mission. As a result we have developed a new Vision and Mission that captures our role as a specialist and contemporary mental health provider. Our Vision emphasises our consumer focus and our Mission explains that this will be achieved through high quality services, translational research and collaborative relationships with our stakeholders.

While developing the Strategic Plan we took the opportunity to critically review our progress against our former Plan. The changes to our environment and our achievements over the past five years are extensive. The focus on recovery and consumer participation had just started to gain momentum in 2010, and it is rewarding to see just how far we have come in this regard.

We now have in place a robust governance framework that ensures that Forensicare remains transparent and accountable. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department

of Justice and Regulation so that our services continue to reflect Government policies and practices. In doing so, we will broaden our outreach to our stakeholder agencies to support and promote an understanding of emerging forensic mental health knowledge gained from our specialist research program.

The challenge facing Forensicare over the coming three year life of the Strategic Plan is how to best provide for our increasing consumer base without compromising our level of care and treatment. In 2013-2014 we experienced unprecedented demand for our services across the organisation, and this shows no sign of abating. This is a troubling reflection of the high level of acuity of people in the prison and mental health systems, and the limited capacity of Thomas Embling Hospital to meet the demand for admissions for people acutely unwell.

While faced with a challenging and rapidly changing environment, we are proud of our achievements over the past five years. These are predominantly due to the enthusiasm of our consumers and staff to adopt and embrace new strategies to improve outcomes for all our consumers. This is an ongoing process, and our new Strategic Plan ensures that these principles remain at the forefront of our ongoing development.

The development of this Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the support and input from our stakeholders. It is invaluable to be given the opportunity to listen to our stakeholders, and we remain grateful to them for their time and their willingness to contribute to our forward planning. We look forward to continuing our work with all those we consulted over the coming years.



**Bill Healy**  
Chair,  
Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health  
Board



**Tom Dalton**  
CEO  
May 2015

# Who We Are and What We Do

Forensicare was established in 1997 to provide forensic mental health services in Victoria. These services seek to meet the needs of mentally disordered offenders, the mental health and justice sectors and the community. While the primary focus is the provision of clinical services through a recovery framework, which includes effective assessment, treatment and management of forensic patients and clients, a comprehensive research program operates and specialist training and professional education is provided for our staff and the broader mental health and criminal justice sectors.

Forensicare is the only agency in Victoria whose work spans both the mental health and justice sectors, and as a result, Forensicare has a unique perspective on mental health and public safety issues.

Forensicare is governed by a Board of up to nine Directors that is accountable to the Minister for Mental Health. Directors are appointed by the Governor in Council for 3 year terms, on the recommendation of the Minister for Mental Health.

## Legislation

The principal legislation under which Forensicare operates is the *Mental Health Act 2014*. Sections 328-345 establish the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health and detail the functions and requirements of Forensicare and its Board. Other key legislation under which we operate includes the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997*, *Corrections Act 1986* and *Sentencing Act 1991*.

## Our Services

Forensicare has an integrated range of clinical services for people with a serious mental illness in the criminal justice and general mental health systems. Forensicare has a total staffing profile of 449 staff, or 397.7 EFT (at 31 March 2015).

Forensicare provides clinical services through –

### Thomas Embling Hospital

Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services we operate a 116 bed secure hospital, consisting of seven units, providing Acute Care and Continuing Care Programs, including a dedicated acute Women's Unit. Patients are generally admitted to Thomas Embling Hospital from the criminal justice system under the *Mental Health Act 2014*, *Sentencing Act 1991* or the *Crimes Mental Impairment (Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997*.

### Prison Mental Health Service

Delivered under contract with the Department of Justice and Regulation. In the men's prison system we operate a 16-bed Acute Assessment Unit, specialist clinics, outpatient services and a reception assessment program at Melbourne Assessment Prison; Psychiatric Registrar Clinics, Nurse Practitioner Clinics and sessions by a visiting psychiatrist at the Metropolitan Remand Centre, together with a Mobile Forensic Mental Health Service (which is based at the Centre); Nurse Practitioner Clinics at Ararat and Loddon prisons; and sessions by a visiting psychiatrist at Ararat, Barwon, Loddon, Middleton, Marnong and Dhurringile prisons.

In the Women's prison system we operate a 20-bed residential program in the Marmak Unit, intensive outreach program and therapeutic day program for women at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and psychiatrist sessions at Tarrengower prison.

## Community Forensic Mental Health Service

Funded largely through the Department of Health and Human Services we operate a statewide service, providing assessment and multidisciplinary treatment to high risk clients referred from area mental health services, correctional providers, courts, the Adult Parole Board, Thomas Embling Hospital, our prison services, government agencies and private practitioners.

The programs include –

- Community Forensic Mental Health Program
- Problem Behaviour Program
- Court Services Program
- Community Integration Program
- Non-custodial Supervision Order Consultation and Liaison Program

## Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science

Forensicare's research program operates under the auspice of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, a joint venture established with Swinburne University of Technology. The Centre brings together academics, clinicians and researchers in forensic mental health and forensic behavioural science research, teaching and practice development. It offers an inter-disciplinary staffing profile, with representatives from psychiatry, psychology, social work, law, nursing, occupational therapy and epidemiology.

The Centre focusses on transferring academic and clinical excellence into practice in the health, community services and criminal justice sectors. The training, consultation and research undertaken by the Centre have strengthened the field of forensic behavioural science, both in Australia and internationally.

## Our Community

We provide forensic mental health services for people –

- with a serious mental illness in the criminal justice system
- at risk of offending who pose a risk to themselves or others
- referred from the general mental health system for specialist advice, support and/or treatment.

Forensicare prides itself as an organisation that provides care and treatment to a broad range of consumers that is equal to that provided within the wider community. We provide specialist forensic mental health services that are not available elsewhere in the state. Our consumer base consists of –

- prisoners referred for specialist assessment or ongoing care in a prison based residential unit or through an outpatient service
- people with a serious mental illness transiting from the prison system to the community
- remanded or sentenced prisoners who are transferred to Thomas Embling Hospital from the prison system
- people who have had an order made by a court under the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997*
- patients admitted to Thomas Embling Hospital for specialist management from other mental health services
- people found guilty and referred by courts for a psychiatric assessment
- people receiving care from general mental health services referred for specialist assessment and advice
- people on Orders referred for assessment or treatment from Community Corrections or the Adult Parole Board.

## In 2013-2014

**6,680 reception assessments conducted at Melbourne Assessment Prison**

**6,481 outpatient attendances at Melbourne Assessment Prison**

**115 admissions to Marmmak Unit, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre**

**93 admissions to the Acute Units at Thomas Embling Hospital**

**16,189 service hours at Community Forensic Mental Health Service**



# Our Achievements 2010-2014

Our Strategic Plan 2010-2014 provided a sound framework for Forensicare to further consolidate and develop our clinical and support services and our role in the mental health and criminal justice systems.

The rapid growth of the prison population in Victoria over the past five years has impacted on our ability to achieve some of the goals that we set in 2010, as we adjusted our service priorities to meet the needs of the new environment. The

foundation laid by the Strategic Plan enabled us to respond to these needs while continuing to achieve the goals set.

## Key Achievements from our Strategic Plan 2010-2014

### ACCESS AND RECOVERY

#### We have -

Participated in the development of the Forensic Mental Health Service Plan commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services to quantify future demand and capacity requirements for forensic mental health services to meet the increased demand from the mental health and criminal justice systems.

Implemented a new model of care at Thomas Embling Hospital, which incorporates –

- recovery integrated into clinical practice
- strengthened clinical pathways
- increased recognition of the roles of Family and Carer Advocates and Consumer Consultants
- therapeutic programs (based on evidence based research) in the identified priority areas – Mental Health Recovery, Dual Diagnosis, Offending and Violence, Occupational Function and Performance
- a primary health care service (provided by a specialist General Practitioner and Practice Nurse)
- community transition pathways for up to seven Thomas Embling Hospital patients at the new Community Recovery Program, Austin Health.

Reduced our rate of seclusion from 15.58 per 1,000 bed days in 2011-2012 to 11.85 in 2013-2014.

Contracted with Justice Health to provide prison based forensic mental health services for five years (to 2017) and substantially increased the scope of the services provided.

Established a Nurse Practitioner model in our prison services.

Developed and received validation of a Stalking Risk Profile Tool which has been adopted internationally.

Implemented organisation-wide –

- Disability Access Plan
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Action Plan

Committed to the introduction of a smoke free policy across all Forensicare sites on 1 July 2015 (consistent with the timeframe adopted by Corrections Victoria).



## SUSTAINABILITY

### We have –

Achieved new service provision opportunities –

- Appointed the provider of forensic mental health services at the new private prison at Ravenhall, including 75 mental health beds and a large outpatient program (due to be completed in late 2017).
- Contracted with the Department of Justice and Regulation to expand our service provision in the criminal justice system, including the provision of the Mobile Forensic Mental Health Service based at Metropolitan Remand Centre and Suicide and Self Harm Training for prison officers.
- Awarded three year contract with the Department of Health and Human Services to provide assessments of sex offenders in relation to Child Protection issues (to 2015).

Secured funding contribution for the Problem Behaviour Program work through Corrections Victoria and mental impairment reports for the Office of Public Prosecutions through Department of Justice and Regulation.

Maintained accreditation by Australian Council on Healthcare Standards, through organisation wide survey in 2011 and periodic review in 2013.

Implemented the new *Mental Health Act* 2014.

Appointed a Clinical Director and Assistant Clinical Director, Prisons.

Established an organisation-wide clinical governance framework, integrating clinical risk management and quality improvement, consumer engagement and workforce effectiveness.

Implemented electronic progress notes across the organisation.

Increased staff training by 55% in the three year period from 2010-2011. New training included –

- Short Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability (START) program for nursing staff (92% trained)
- Forensic Risk Assessment and Treatment (FRAT) program for clinical staff on the Model of Offending
- Trauma Informed Care.

Commenced collaborative research projects –

- Evaluation of the outcome measures of relevance for offenders with a mental illness (funded by National Forensic Mental Health Information Development Expert Advisory Panel - ongoing)
- The prevalence of mental illnesses in Victorian prisoners (with the Centre of Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Health – ongoing).

---

## COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

### We have –

Worked closely with Swinburne University of Technology to reestablish the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science at the university with a broader mandate.

---

Established a successful external training program for stakeholders on forensic mental health issues.

---

Developed and implemented a Communication Strategy.

---





# The Challenges We Face

---

## **Demand Management**

There has been considerable change in the mental health and criminal justice environments in the period since our last Strategic Plan was developed.

Increasing demand across the mental health system and the rising use and emerging presence of a new range of synthetic recreational drugs is having a major impact on all mental health services, particularly with the associated increased potential for aggravated violence.

Across the criminal justice system, the sentencing and parole changes introduced over the past two years have contributed to a 24% growth in the prison population between January 2013 and October 2014.

The impact of these changes continues to be felt across Forensicare, and indeed all mental health services. At Forensicare, the level of acuity and number of people requiring services has grown and the balancing of demand and capacity is set to remain a key challenge over the coming years.

## **Service Plan for Forensic Mental Health Services – The next steps**

In 2013-2014 the Department of Health and Human Services engaged consultants to develop a Service Plan for Forensic Mental Health Services in Victoria. Forensicare was a major contributor to the development of the Service Plan and supports many of its recommendations. We will continue to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to implement those initiatives from the Service Plan which the government elects to take forward.

Similarly, in the Department of Justice and Regulation, the Justice Health Branch has been working to develop a roadmap for the future and we will continue to collaborate closely with them to implement those initiatives which are developed. This will be of critical importance in the lead up to the commissioning of the prison to be built at Ravenhall and the potential for future commissioning of health and mental health services in prisons, where many of the major contracts (including Forensicare's Service Agreement with the Department of Justice and Regulation) expire in 2017.

## **Innovative model of care**

Linked to both the increasing prison population and the development of the Service Plan, is the need to continue to review the model of care at Thomas Embling Hospital to ensure that it meets the needs of our consumers. There is no single response to this as it requires us to address patient flow across our prison and inpatient services. Because of the length of time that prisoners are required to wait in prison for a bed to become available at Thomas Embling Hospital, the level of acuity on admission impacts heavily on flow through, as patients who have experienced a delay in receiving treatment can take longer to respond when this is able to commence.

The model of care must ensure that any internal blockages that hinder progress through the hospital are removed in a way that does not increase risk. The safety of our consumers, staff and the community must continue to remain a key element of our service. The challenge for Forensicare is to balance risk with a model of care that is agile, dynamic and recovery focussed.

## **Ravenhall and other service expansions**

Forensicare's appointment as the provider of secondary forensic mental health services at the new prison to be built at Ravenhall was a major achievement of our previous Strategic Plan. These services will include a 75-bed mental health unit and outpatient services for approximately 100 prisoners. We are working towards the timeframe announced by Government that the prison will be completed in late 2017.

---

This is a major developmental initiative for Forensicare which will demand increased attention as completion and the prison opening draws near. The immediate challenge we face with this and any service expansion plan is workforce planning and its associated implications. Forensicare requires a highly specialised workforce to deliver services, and this will be the same for the new prison at Ravenhall. We will need to develop a range of strategic responses to support the necessary expansion of our workforce in time to meet the operational deadlines of the prison opening (expected to be late 2017/early 2018) and to ensure that all our staff in all our settings are provided with training and skills to enable them to achieve clinical excellence.

The other workforce issue that requires consideration is the retention of our existing workforce, which is key to achieving our projected staffing requirements. This can only be achieved by strengthening our existing staff wellbeing and incentive programs and ensuring the resilience of our existing workforce. Strategies to address these areas over the coming three years will need to be continued.

## **Outreach**

The mental health environment has changed considerably over the last five years, becoming broader in scope and complexity. With these changes, our community partners are requesting greater levels of clinical guidance and support and forensic mental health education, together with research and evaluation opportunities. The clinical support and guidance required is primarily in relation to the management of high-risk and potentially violent consumers, and closer collaboration in the lead up to and following discharge. The Forensic Clinical Specialist Program makes a major contribution to this area, but with only ten Specialist positions across the state, they all have an enormous task.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that higher levels of community partnering and collaborative relationships are required if we are to succeed in ensuring that consumers are safely managed in the community wherever possible. There is no sign of this demand abating, and strategies are required to ensure that this area is not neglected over the coming three years.

## **Research**

Forensicare must continue to use translational research as the foundation for new programs and services. The recent move of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science to the Swinburne University of Technology provides an opportunity to strengthen our research capability and partnerships in clinical and non-clinical disciplines with Swinburne and other agencies.

Forensicare and Swinburne share the view that our research program needs to have a focus on participatory research, identifying problems and effective solutions, undertaking health-risk appraisals using a bio-psycho social model and expanding into “beyond clinical” research areas. The area of risk will continue to be a focus, together with a robust approach to evaluation.

Strengthening our clinical leadership through the establishment of joint academic and clinical positions and developing new talent will be a key priority in consolidating our research program. This consolidation will be fundamental to equipping Forensicare to deliver best practice programs and services, evaluating our existing programs, and sharing our expertise more widely.

## **Our IT Network**

Increased efficiencies in our Information and Communications Technology service delivery model are essential if our technology systems are to continue to provide the level of support required by our current and expanding clinical services. Across the life of this Strategic Plan we must continue to increase our ability to provide staff and consumers with access to contemporary technology to aid and support recovery and ensure the sustainability of our organisation.



# How We Are Going to Succeed in 2015-2017

## Strategic Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

**Goal 1**  
Greater accessibility to services

**Goal 2**  
Meet new challenges and drive change

**Goal 3**  
Innovation in everything we do

**Goal 4**  
Outstanding organisational performance



## Goals

## Objectives

### Goal 1: Greater accessibility to services

#### Outcome

Evidence based forensic mental health services are delivered to a wide range of consumers in the forensic mental health area

- Work with Government to achieve its vision for, and implementation of, Service Plans in the mental health and prison systems
- Increase early intervention and diversion opportunities for consumers in the courts
- Meet emerging needs of consumers in the mental health and justice systems
- Develop collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to meet the full range of consumer needs
- Implement agile and dynamic approaches to managing patient flow and throughput in Thomas Embling Hospital and prison services
- Actively share our knowledge, research findings and expertise through the mental health and criminal justice systems
- Advocate for our consumers' needs.

### Goal 2: Meet new challenges and drive change

#### Outcome

Forensicare participates in the ongoing development of mental health services

- Ravenhall – achieve commissioning of Forensicare's specialist mental health services at the prison at Ravenhall in time for commercial acceptance
- Ensure the development of a culture of recovery, safety and quality across all Forensicare services
- Be an authoritative source to Government and other stakeholders on forensic mental health issues and policy
- Actively engage with stakeholders to meet consumer needs.

---

## Goals

## Objectives

---

### Goal 3: Innovation in everything we do

#### Outcome

Our services are based on best evidence and deliver contemporary best practice to our consumers and stakeholders

- Recovery, safety and quality are at the centre of all that we do
- Develop models of care that better respond to the breadth of consumer needs
- There is a place for families and carers in our service and their role in recovery is supported
- Build a research program through our partnership with Swinburne University and collaboration with consumers and stakeholders that strengthens clinical practice and increases knowledge
- Embed a culture of evaluation in existing and developing programs.

### Goal 4: Outstanding organisational performance

#### Outcome

Forensicare is acknowledged as an effective, innovative service that is accountable, transparent and supports safety and continuous improvement

- Be an employer of choice, providing a safe and valued work environment and be engaged with our staff
- Our technology and E-health environment supports the achievement of our goals and objectives
- Our financial management and organisational infrastructure enables sustainability
- A best-practice governance framework supports our service and operates across the organisation.

# Alignment with the Victorian Government's VHPF Health Priority Areas

## Forensicare Strategic Plan 2015-2017

## Health Priority Area (VHPF)

Goals and Objectives	Improving every Victorian's health status and health experiences	Developing a system that is responsive to people's needs	Expanding service, workforce and system capacity	Increasing the system's financial sustainability and productivity	Implementing continuous improvements and innovation	Increasing accountability and transparency	Utilising e-health and communications technology
<b>Greater accessibility to services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Government to achieve its vision for, and implementation of, Service Plans in the mental health and prison systems</li> <li>Increase early intervention and diversion opportunities for consumers in the courts</li> <li>Meet emerging needs of consumers in the mental health and justice systems</li> <li>Develop collaborative partnerships to meet the full range of consumer needs</li> <li>Implement agile and dynamic approaches to managing patient flow and throughput in Thomas Embling Hospital to increase access from prisons and the community</li> <li>Actively share our knowledge, research findings and expertise through the mental health and criminal justice systems</li> <li>Advocate for our consumers' needs</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●	●		
	●	●	●		●		
	●	●			●		
	●	●			●	●	
	●	●		●	●		
	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	●	●					
<b>Meet new challenges and drive change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ravenhall – achieve commissioning of Forensicare's specialist mental health services at the prison at Ravenhall in time for commercial acceptance</li> <li>Ensure the development of a culture of recovery, safety and quality across all Forensicare services</li> <li>Be an authoritative source to government and other stakeholders on forensic mental health issues and policy</li> <li>Actively engage with stakeholders to meet consumer needs</li> </ul>		●	●	●	●		
		●		●	●	●	
	●	●					
		●			●		
<b>Innovation in everything we do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recovery, safety and quality are at the centre of all that we do</li> <li>Develop models of care that better respond to the breadth of consumer needs</li> <li>There is a place for families and carers in our service and their role in recovery is supported</li> <li>Build a research program through our partnership with Swinburne University and collaboration with consumers and stakeholders that strengthens clinical practice and increases knowledge</li> <li>Embed a culture of evaluation in existing and developing programs</li> </ul>					●		
		●			●		
		●			●		
					●		
					●		
<b>Outstanding organisational performance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be an employer of choice, providing a safe and valued work environment and be engaged with our staff</li> <li>Our technology and E-health environment supports the achievement of our goals and objectives</li> <li>Our financial management and organisational infrastructure enables sustainability</li> <li>A best-practice governance framework supports our service and operates across the organisation</li> </ul>			●				
					●		●
				●			
					●	●	●





## Service Locations

### Thomas Embling Hospital

Yarra Bend Road  
Fairfield Vic 3078  
Australia

Tel 61 3 9495 9100  
Fax 61 3 9495 9199

### Community Forensic Mental Health Service

505 Hoddle Street  
Clifton Hill Vic 3068

Tel 61 3 9947 2500  
Fax 61 3 9947 2599

### Forensicare Prison Mental Health Service

Melbourne Assessment Prison  
317 Spencer Street  
West Melbourne Vic 3003

Tel 61 3 9321 4250  
Fax 61 3 9329 4820

Dame Phyllis Frost Centre  
Riding-Boundary Road  
Deer Park Vic 3023

Tel 61 3 9217 8400  
Fax 61 3 9217 8480

Metropolitan Remand Centre  
134-154 Middle Road  
Ravenhall Vic 3023

Tel 61 3 9217 7903  
Fax 61 3 9217 7920

Email: [info@forensicare.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@forensicare.vic.gov.au)

[www.forensicare.vic.gov.au](http://www.forensicare.vic.gov.au)

