

MEDIA RELEASE

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Adult Acute Mental Health Unit's family rooms receive a freshen up

Family and carers of patients of Toowoomba Hospital's Adult Acute Mental Health Unit (AMHU) now have a more pleasant environment to meet with their loved ones.

Thanks to the suggestions of carers whose loved ones have previously accessed the AMHU, four family rooms have been given a fresh coat of paint as well as fitted out with new furniture and photographs.

AMHU carer consultant Trish MacFarlane said the rooms created a more pleasant experience for visitors to the unit.

"Previously the rooms were quite dark and not very inviting," Ms MacFarlane said.

"By working with current and former carers of patients of the AMHU, the rooms have been refreshed and are now much more welcoming."

The project also sought input from the local branch of Arafmi Queensland; an organisation that provides support to carers of people with mental illnesses.

"The rooms are a private space where patients of the AMHU can visit with their families or loved ones, away from hubbub of the unit," Ms MacFarlane said.

Each room features two photographs taken by Warwick-based weather photographer Chris McFerran, who worked with carer Barbara Hannon to select the most appropriate images.

"All eight photographs were taken in the Southern Downs," Mr McFerran said.

"I think you can get lost in the images. The eyes are drawn in, and travel somewhere until they settle on a particular spot."

Ms MacFarlane said the project to revamp the rooms was so successful, that she hoped the carers who were involved would continue to offer their skills and time to the unit.

"The collaboration between hospital staff and our carers was so positive that plans are now in place to set up a volunteer service at the unit," she said.

"Some of the same people who were involved in this project have put their hands up to take it one step further, and to donate their time as volunteers.

"The volunteers will act as a friendly face for visitors to the unit and to ensure that people know where to go for the support they need."

Ends

Caption: Inspecting the refreshed family room at the Toowoomba Hospital's Adult Mental Health Unit are (from left) AMHU carer consultant Trish MacFarlane; AMHU nurse unit manager David Joyce; Vivien Dunlop from Arafmi; Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service's volunteer and consumer participation services manager Sam Savva, carer volunteer Marlyn McInnerney, carer volunteer Barbara Hannon and South East Queensland weather photographer Chris McFerran.

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