

8 April 2019

The Department of Planning
Canberra ACT

Dear Officer,

Re: Support for DA Application of new hospital build at Denison Street, Deakin

Think Psychology Solutions (or just 'Think') was established in Deakin in 2011 by experienced Clinical Psychologists Vanessa Hamilton and Jason McCrae who were looking to establish and undertake a team based, multi disciplinary Psychology practice. Both Vanessa and Jason have strong backgrounds in the Canberra mental health community with Vanessa being the former Principal Psychologist at Mental Health ACT and Jason a former senior clinician at Lifeline Canberra.

Eight years after it was established, Think is one of the larger Psychology practices in Canberra who employ a team of 10 Psychologists, 2 Psychiatrists (including a Child and Adolescent Specialist), a GP and 2 admin staff. We have strong connections to general practice and psychiatry in Canberra and one of the largest referral bases in the ACT and surrounding region. In addition we have partnered on various projects with Capital Health Network (Canberra's Primary Health Network) and both the University of Canberra and ANU.

We are writing this letter in support of the proposed redevelopment and development of a currently unoccupied building in Denison Street, Deakin for the purpose of being a specialist private Mental Health facility including a private mental health inpatient hospital and mental health specialist consulting rooms.

Without restating the analysis outlined in other areas of this application there is a need within the ACT community for additional mental health inpatient beds. Currently Think clients who find themselves in need of such a treatment facility are typically required to admit themselves to facilities in Sydney, Wollongong or Wagga Wagga. This takes the patient away from family, friends and their local treatment team at a time when it is most required.

Additionally once discharged from the facility (in Sydney, Wollongong etc) and stepped down to the treatment team in the Canberra community they are unable to have ongoing outpatient treatment at the hospital that would assist in their transition. This is sub-sub-optimal care and our region deserves better.

The requirement for adolescent patients to travel if they require inpatient care, is a necessity, given our lack of any dedicated youth mental health beds within the region.

Think is currently well progressed, should the development proceed, in committing to lease space in the consulting rooms area of the development and sees an opportunity to partner with a hospital provider to provide specialist psychology, psychiatry and general practitioner services to the inpatient hospital and its associated day-services.

We would anticipate that the development of such a facility would provide employment growth in the sector in general with Psychologists, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners attracted to Canberra to provide services in such a development. At Think alone we would anticipate a close to doubling of the clinicians and

administrative staff we would employ or contract. We believe the appeal to clinicians from other jurisdictions of being able to work part of the time in a private sector facility and part of the time in a public health setting will attract clinicians from various mental health professions.

In summary, Think fully supports this development proposal and in fact is excited at the opportunity it provides for the community, mental health clinicians and the Think practice in particular.

Yours Faithfully



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