



**PRIME MINISTER
THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP**

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH
THE HON. SUSSAN LEY MP**

MEDIA RELEASE

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A new blueprint for mental health services

Today the Turnbull Government releases its response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programme and Services.

The response sets out a bold reform package that will put the individual needs of patients at the centre of our mental health system.

Every year, around 4 million Australians suffer some form of mental health issue, making it the third largest chronic disease in the country, only behind cancer and cardiovascular disease.

However, we recognise that when it comes to mental health or illness, not everyone is the same.

Someone suffering a mental health issue related to a specific incident in their life such as sickness or job loss may require a different level of care to a person with long-term chronic depression or psychiatric conditions.

The Review noted that there is significant spending on mental health. Yet too many Australians fall through the cracks or do not receive the full support they need.

It is clear that our current "one-size-fits-all approach" is not helping Australians suffering from mental illness as best it can.

The reforms released today focus on a number of concrete actions:

- Contestable mental health services will be commissioned, not delivered, through the recently established Primary Health Networks (PHNs);
- Coordinated packages of care will be created for people with severe and complex needs and flexible support for mild and moderate needs;
- A new Digital Mental Health Gateway will optimise the use of digital mental health services;
- A new approach to suicide prevention, co-ordinated by PHNs.

The reforms will be rolled out over a three year period between 2016 and 2019 and delivered within the existing funding envelope. The Turnbull Government will work with states and territories to develop the Fifth National Mental Health Plan to ensure smooth integration of these new reforms.

The Government's full response is available on the front page of the Department of Health website: www.health.gov.au.

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Details of the Reforms

Stepped Care Model

- Australia will move towards a 'stepped care' model in stages over the next three years.
- This will see Australians receive varying levels of primary care treatment and support depending on their level of need as determined by a health professional, whether that be 'at risk', mild, moderate or severe/complex.
- This will shape the delivery of primary mental health services towards a more modern, flexible and nimble model of care, rather than the current "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Integrated Team-Care Package Tailored to Individual Needs

- For the first time, Australians with a severe and complex mental illness will also have access to an integrated care package tailored to their individual needs.
- A package would see people identified by health professionals as having complex care needs eligible to access a package of integrated health services, including: comprehensive assessment and care-coordination support; psychological services; mental health nursing; drug and alcohol services; vocational assistance; and peer support.
- These arrangements will be phased in over three years from early 2016-17, with initial trial sites to be identified during this current financial year (2015-16).

Localised Services Delivered Through Primary Care Networks

- To successfully deliver a stepped care model it must be recognised there are individual needs and challenges that are specific to communities that do not always fit the one-size-fits-all model of service delivery run from Canberra.
- What works in Brisbane may not work in Broken Hill. Service providers operating in Adelaide may not consider it viable to operate in Albury.
- The Turnbull Government will undertake a landmark shift in service delivery from Canberra to local communities through the 31 Primary Health Networks across the country.
- PHNs will be put in charge of commissioning the mental health services they consider necessary and appropriate to the needs of their local communities, rather than them being contracted at a fragmented national level in Canberra.
- For example, decisions about the youth mental health services required in a local community will now be made by that local community, not Canberra.
- The Government's reform package will include more than \$350 million per annum that will be redirected from Canberra towards PHNs to deliver mental health services on the ground from 2016-17.
- The funding will be made up of: ATAPS; Early Psychosis Prevention & Intervention Centres (EPPIC); Headspace service delivery (national office to remain); Mental Health Nurse Incentive Programme; Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas; and various fragmented Suicide Prevention programmes.

Suicide Prevention

- A new approach to suicide prevention, co-ordinated by PHNs, focusing on evidence and community based suicide prevention activities to address local needs, and better integration with state and territory activities.

Digital Gateway

- Harnessing innovative digital mental health technologies via a single entry point gateway. The gateway will navigate people to the most appropriate service for their individual needs.

Increased Access to Services for Indigenous Australians

- An additional \$85 million over three years to provide greater access to mental health services for Indigenous Australians.

Nationally Co-ordinated Services for Children & Youth

- A new single school-based initiative covering early childhood through the end of secondary school will be rolled out from July 1 2016.
- The Mental Health in Education initiative will bring together several existing programmes to create a single comprehensive service available to children and young people in order to improve outcomes through better mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.
- This will include providing teachers and other staff working with children with training and resources to create a supportive environment and recognise, prevent or reduce the impact of mental health problems when they emerge

National Leadership through 5th national Mental Health Plan

- The Turnbull Government will work with states and territories to develop the Fifth National Mental Health Plan. This will ensure smooth integration of these new reforms and help provide a better pathway between the State based, acute mental health system and the Federally-funded primary mental health system.
- This includes ensuring there are safety measures in place so that if someone with a mental illness is discharged from acute hospital care, they do not fall through the cracks.

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