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New report outlines economic benefits of investment in mental health

Mental Health Australia Chair Jennifer Westacott and Executive Director, Policy, Programs & Evaluation at KPMG, Gary Belfield will tonight launch a ground-breaking report into the economic benefits of investment in mental health reform.

Investing to Save, tackles a set of complex issues from a new perspective, and a new pragmatic approach to the scale of the task of reforming our mental health system.

"There have been many reviews, inquiries and other various investigations into Australia's mental health system. But this is a report unlike any other, it is ground-breaking," said Ms Westacott.

"At Mental Health Australia our vision is for mentally healthy people, and mentally healthy communities and thanks to the pro-bono work of KPMG, this report makes a major contribution towards that vision."

"It takes into account a range of complex issues, and presents actionable, scalable and context-specific solutions – solutions that not only provide demonstrable health and social benefits, but quantifiable economic returns to taxpayers and to the community."

"In short, this report shows how with the right targeted investments, we can improve the mental health of our community, and in turn the mental wealth of the nation."

KPMG Director Andrew Dempster said 'our report highlights three core areas for action:

1. Support individuals with mental health issues to gain and maintain employment, and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce
2. Minimise avoidable emergency department presentations and hospitalisations
3. Invest in promotion, prevention and early intervention.

"Our detailed review of the evidence suggests that interventions such as enhanced job control, resilience training and stress management can deliver significant improvements in employee mental health. Overall, we found that such workplace interventions can generate return on investment of \$1.30 to over \$4.70 for every dollar spent," said Mr Dempster.

Thanks to KPMG, *Investing to Save* is now a vital contributor to mental health reform.

"Every day many thousands of professionals help many thousands of consumers and carers live contributing lives in the community and in a range of service settings, and that work must continue. But every day, many people also miss out on the services they need, or our ailing systems fail in crucial ways," said Ms Westacott.



"This report makes a vital contribution to remedying some of those failures with a very specific to-do list which makes economic sense. A list backed by evidence and sound economic modeling. And a list for governments to act on now, using the governance framework and priorities that all governments have agreed in the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan."

"The team at KPMG has produced a report we can all learn a great deal from and we thank them for their passion, their acumen and their professionalism to improve the mental health of the nation."

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