



The Coalition's Policy

Key Commitments

The Coalition is committed to a bold package of mental health reforms that ensures that the best help for people with mental ill health, and their families and carers, is available.

We are investing in a modern 21st century mental health system that targets support, care and funding at the regional level through the new Primary Health Networks (PHNs). PHNs include new partnerships with government at all levels, non-government organisations and the private sector, which means better tailored care for communities.

Under the Coalition, there will be 10 PHN lead sites, all champions of crucial reforms, trialling innovative approaches in mental health services including four sites to focus on suicide prevention.

We will also fund an additional eight Suicide Prevention Trials in regional, rural and remote areas. This will bring the total sites to 12, building on best practice and community models and adopting new digital technologies to assist in crisis support, clinical intervention and ongoing support for individuals.

The Coalition is committed to using 21st century digital technologies to support mental health reforms by supporting the transformation of e-mental health and other digital services.

Our approach to mental health focuses on the whole life span – in early childhood, schools, post-school education, entry to employment, workplaces and the broader community.

To strengthen prevention and community awareness, we will establish a Suicide Prevention Research Fund that will support targeted research, develop and evaluate regional suicide prevention models and provide a best practice hub of resources.

The Coalition will also strengthen the National Mental Health Commission, who will be charged with overseeing mental health reforms and providing direct advice to the Minister.

We will also:

- guarantee funding for youth mental health services, through *headspace*, and fund 10 new centres
- trial innovative mental health care across Australia, for those with severe mental health issues
- drive a national approach to suicide prevention through 12 regional trials
- trial new digital technologies to provide 24/7 support and data
- promote and support a more sustainable and flexible mental health nursing workforce

The Coalition understands the impact of depression, anxiety and poor mental health on both individuals and our productivity as a nation is significant.

Our mental health reforms will result in better personalised support and care, greater opportunity and better lives for Australians.

Our Plan to Strengthen Mental Health Care in Australia

The Coalition is committed to a bold package of mental health reforms that ensures that the best help for people with mental ill health, and their families and carers, is available.

Our mental health reforms will result in better personalised support and care, greater opportunity and better lives for Australians.

With these reforms, community mental health services will be delivered in a 'stepped care' approach, enabling patients to receive the appropriate level of care, matched to the severity of their illness.

These key reforms in mental health will be coordinated with our other major significant primary care reform 'health care homes' for those with complex illness.

The independent National Mental Health Commission will oversee and report annually on the progress and implementation of these important reforms.

1. Creating 10 Mental Health Lead Sites

The Coalition will prioritise \$26 million to support 10 PHN mental health lead sites to initially be champions of mental health reform over the next two years. Additional funding of \$7 million over three years will also be provided to sites conducting regional suicide trials.

From July 2016, these 10 sites will lead the implementation of stepped care models.

The key work of the lead sites in the primary care setting will be to:

- establish regional service pathways in collaboration with Local Hospital Networks, Non-Government Organisations, the National Disability Insurance Agency, and other related services within the 'stepped care' approach
- demonstrate models of stepped care, including: coordinated clinical care for people with severe mental illness who are managed in primary care; models of early intervention low intensity mental health services, such as coaching services; and regional approaches to suicide prevention
- explore the use of digital technology in self-care, promoting good physical health, the delivery of effective stepped-care models, and preventing re-hospitalisation for those with more persistent disorders.

The ten PHN lead sites will focus on:

- regional integration and models of stepped care more broadly (including low intensity) demonstrating best practice in ensuring a range of primary mental health

services are available to better match with individual and local population need. These sites will be in Murrumbidgee, Sydney and Melbourne.

- models of care for young people with severe mental illness including innovative ways to target a broader range of youth with, or at risk of, severe mental illness. These sites will be in Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and South Eastern Melbourne.
- models of coordinated care for adults with severe mental illness and complex care needs; and regional approaches to suicide prevention. These sites will be in Brisbane North, the North Coast and North Western Melbourne.
- regional suicide prevention, including integration of suicide prevention and youth mental health activity. This site will be in Perth South.

The combination of these lead sites provides coverage across multiple jurisdictions and metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

This work will assist all 31 PHNs to match mental health services to individual needs through innovative approaches to stepped care.

2. Youth Mental Health

headspace

Our *headspace* centres provide for holistic care for young people in four key areas – mental health, related physical health, alcohol and substance abuse as well as social and vocational support for young people aged 12-25 years.

In 2013, the Coalition committed to increasing *headspace* centres to a total of 100 Australia-wide. All 100 centres will be fully operational by 2017, and will assist up to 80,000 young Australians each year.

Under the Coalition funding for *headspace* is guaranteed. Consistent with our mental health reforms, from July 2016, *headspace* services will be supported and will be funded by their local PHN under the Coalition.

The *headspace* National Office will have oversight of national standards and data. PHNs will have to satisfy the Minister for Health if they want to move away from the *headspace* model.

In addition, the Coalition will invest \$20 million for 10 new *headspace* centres to bring the overall total to 110 by 2019. The aim will be to increase service coverage with a specific focus on rural and regional areas. This could include an expansion of an existing *headspace* service using innovative approaches, such as satellite centres, outreach services and other activities.

Severe youth mental illness

The Coalition will continue funding for six Early Psychosis Youth Services, via their PHNs, at current funding levels for three years until 2019, to allow time for regional reforms to be rolled out and a thorough evaluation to be undertaken.

To ensure services are accessible across Australia, PHNs will be centrally involved in developing a regional service model for young people with severe mental illness.

The Coalition has identified three PHN lead sites to develop and trial regional service pathways, and partnerships with state and territory services, community-based organisations and private providers.

These lead sites will support a broader group of young people (not limited to early psychosis), on the basis of impairment, persistent mental ill health, concurrent substance misuse and increased risk to physical ill health.

These sites are in Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and South Eastern Melbourne.

Australia's National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health will be centrally involved in providing expert advice to our PHN lead sites; and developing advice more broadly for PHNs regarding regional service models for young people at risk of severe mental illness.

3. Suicide Prevention

Suicide remains the leading cause of death for people under the age of 44. The Indigenous suicide rate was around twice the rate for non-Indigenous Australians. Between 2001 and 2010 on average 100 Indigenous people per year ended their lives through suicide. The majority of these were male (approximately three out of four).

The Coalition is committed to leaving no stone unturned in its approach to suicide prevention, to help prevent suicide and reduce suicidal behaviour.

We are working to better understand the social and economic factors that have contributed to recent increases, and to empower communities to respond locally.

As part of our mental health reforms, we have committed to a new National Suicide Prevention Strategy to address the current fragmented approach to suicide prevention. The Strategy will include funding for national suicide prevention leadership and support activities, including anti-stigma and awareness campaigns and crisis support services.

The Strategy involves our PHNs commissioning community based suicide prevention activities. This will focus on integrating services at the local level including through effective post-discharge follow up, and the need to refocus efforts to prevent suicide in Indigenous communities.

Four of our PHN lead sites located in Queensland (Brisbane North), New South Wales (North Coast), Victoria (North Western Melbourne) and Western Australia (Perth South), will be focussed on new collaborative approaches to community based suicide prevention.

In addition to these four sites, the Coalition will provide an additional \$24 million over 3 years to fund a further eight regional trial sites in identified priority areas, including at least two remote Indigenous regions, Tasmania and regional South Australia.

With key national partners – such as the Black Dog Institute, *beyondblue*, *headspace* and other stakeholders – these trials will bring the best evidence-based strategies, models and digital technologies together to better target people at risk of suicide and ensure a more integrated, regionally-based approach.

The Coalition will also commit \$12 million in funding for a Suicide Prevention Research Fund that will support targeted research, including to develop and evaluate regional suicide prevention models. It will include a best practice hub of resources to support the work of PHNs and others involved in community-based suicide prevention.

We will also provide \$3 million over three years to support the consistent evaluation of the 12 regional suicide prevention trials around Australia and to assess their impact.

The Coalition is committed to reducing suicide rates through regional trials, research and building the evidence base with flexible models, that address regional needs and work in our local communities. Experts have told us this is the only way we can make an impact.

4. New Investment in Digital Technologies for Mental Health

The Coalition is committed to using 21st century digital technologies to support its major regionally-based mental health reforms. We will create one platform to access multiple services.

We will progress the new Digital Mental Health Gateway announced in November 2015, aimed at making mental health tools and information available 24/7 and personalising support.

The Gateway is currently in the development phase. We will work closely with those who need services along with family and carers most affected. It will incorporate a range of web and telephone-based services and tools which will assist users to determine their needs, and referral to appropriate services to suit those needs.

The Coalition will also invest an additional \$30 million over three years to support the transformation of e-mental health and other digital services.

Our commitment means communities not only have access to the best available services developed by Australian agencies, but also worldwide expertise in this rapidly expanding area of personalised health care.

To achieve this outcome, a re-elected Coalition Government will build on the developments achieved under Project Synergy and provide \$10 million per year to extend its regional trials over the next three years.

Australia has a diverse range of communities, from major cities to remote communities. There is not a one size fits all for people when it comes to mental health support and care. We need agile digital technologies that connect services to people and provide specific personalised support and care depending on need.

Working in collaboration with key stakeholders in the mental health sector, we will fund a series of progressive trials to bring the best new digital technologies to communities – tailored support for the young, veterans, suicidal, and get the evidence on what works with real people, in real settings.

We will test the capacity for new technologies to work effectively across organisations who are in contact with those most affected on the ground. Instead of having organisations compete and work in isolation, we will test how we can bring them together to make a seamless pathway for people who need support and care.

It is expected our \$30 million investment will attract co-investment by other governments, private, technical, telecommunication and academic partners.

The Coalition will also provide \$2.5 million to Lifeline to design and trial a Crisis Text service for crisis support and suicide prevention and would complement Project Synergy.

5. Promoting a sustainable and flexible Mental Health Nursing workforce

An important strategy in improving the mental health and wellbeing of all Australians will be developing and sustaining a nursing workforce that is responsive to the mental health needs of the community – across all clinical settings, all cultural groups, and across the spectrum of illness over a person's lifespan.

The Coalition will provide \$1.5 million to the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses to look at a new workforce model.

The College would coordinate with Primary Health Networks co-commissioning trials between PHNs and local area health services which would allow mental health nurses to move between the primary and acute care sectors. It would see the PHNs and local area health services both contribute to funding nurses who would work across both sectors.

The Choice

The Coalition is investing in the mental wealth of all Australians to ensure a stronger economy through workforce participation with greater opportunity for better lives for Australians living with mental health challenges.

We are committed to once in a generation reform, that puts the needs of individuals at the centre of our mental health system and involves our newly established PHNs in planning, commissioning and integrating services at a regional level.

To support this important reform work, 10 PHN lead sites will be champions of mental health reform.

In total there will be 12 suicide prevention trial sites.

A new Suicide Prevention Research Fund and Best Practice Hub will support targeted research and evaluation, and support the PHNs in their role.

The Coalition has guaranteed funding for *headspace* and will fund an additional 10 *headspace* centres, bringing the total to 110, with a focus on additional services in rural and regional areas.

The Coalition's achievements stand in contrast to the situation inherited in 2013.

Labor's mental health policy was piecemeal in nature and not well coordinated.

Labor made mental health a second term priority, and only after public pressure.

In 2011, Labor committed to a 10-year new national mental health 'roadmap.'

However, no serious structural reform whilst in Government or underpinning financial investment with the states and territories was ever implemented.

Further, there was no serious plan to extend service provision in regional Australia.

Now in Opposition, Labor's mental health policy is a reproduction of the National Mental Health Commission's recommendations and mirrors the Coalition's mental health reforms, with the exception of failing to bring in 21st digital technology meaning every Australian will have support "in their hands 24/7."

Only the Coalition can be trusted to deliver a fully-funded, responsible, and effective response to mental health issues across Australia.

Costs

The Coalition will invest \$192 million to strengthen mental health care in Australia.



THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to
www.liberal.org.au/our-plan
nationals.org.au/our-plan/