

# 2016 FEDERAL BUDGET

## Budget analysis

This document details some further analysis of measures in this year's Budget that are likely to be of interest to mental health stakeholders.

### Termination of the National Partnership Agreement on Supporting Mental Health Services

Tuesday night's budget also confirmed the National Partnership Agreement on Supporting Mental Health Services, initially signed under the Gillard Government, will not be renewed. This NPA provided around \$45m per year to states and territories to support people with severe and persistent mental illness by addressing service gaps and prevent ongoing cycling through state mental health systems. [Click here to view the programs this NPA funded.](#)

While jurisdictions are able to make their own decisions about how to manage these funding reductions, it is clear some jurisdictions have been forced to cut services. The Department of Health has not provided any specific information on the front-line impacts on consumers and carers. However, from the information we have gathered so far, Queensland appears particularly impacted. In Queensland, the Housing and Support Program (HASP) and Personalised Support Services (PSS) will cease on 30 June 2016, leaving around 189 people without services. In the ACT, it appears the ACT government will continue funding those programs funded by the NPA that are not being rolled into the NDIS.

### Ceasing drought assistance measure

We have also heard some concerns about the termination of the additional funding for [community mental health services in drought affected areas](#). The Department of Social Services has advised:

*Since 2014, the Australian Government provided an additional \$35 million to temporarily expand mental health and wellbeing services under the Enhanced Social and Community Support measure. This measure was a one-off boost and will end as scheduled on 30 June 2016. The Department of Social Services is working with affected organisations through its network of Grant Agreement Managers.*

*The temporary expansion of these services was in response to severe drought conditions in large parts of Australia. This measure has successfully enabled agencies to identify and assist farmers and farm family members in need of support and referral to clinical services. While the measure is ceasing as scheduled on 30 June 2016, the community connections and referrals that service providers and drought coordinators have made during the measure will outlast the programme's closure.*

*The Australian Government has a number of programmes that continue to assist farmers in need, including income support payments, concessional loans and free rural financial counselling. Information on these programmes is available at [agriculture.gov.au/assistance](http://agriculture.gov.au/assistance).*



*Over the next three years, a new regional approach led by Primary Health Networks will plan, integrate and commission mental health services at a local level, in partnership with relevant services and with a new flexible primary health care funding pool.*

*Community mental health and family and relationship services will continue to be available nationally after the closure of target drought services. For more information about Family and Relationship Services, please contact the Family Relationships Advice Line on 1800 050 321, or to locate your nearest community mental health service, please visit <http://www.serviceproviders.dss.gov.au>*

It is disappointing that these funds have not been redirected to other mental health priorities, consistent with our, and the National Mental Health Commission's principle that there should be "no net reduction in overall investment in mental health."

