



**Mental Health  
Australia**  
Media release

# Dr Peggy Brown AO to drive mental health reform as Chair of the sector's peak body

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**Dr Brown will lead Mental Health Australia, prioritising driving mental health reform and strengthening and uniting the sector.**

The Mental Health Australia Board is excited to announce Dr Peggy Brown AO as its new Chair, continuing the peak body's commitment to improving mental health and driving long-term reform.

Dr Brown's diverse experience in the mental health sector makes her well placed to lead the nation's peak mental health organisation at a time when change is urgently needed.

As an independent, national peak body, Mental Health Australia represents over 140 diverse members, including service providers, organisations representing people with lived experience and their families, carers and supporters, professional bodies and researchers. The organisation strives to drive better mental health policies and systems and unite and strengthen the sector for the benefit of all Australians.

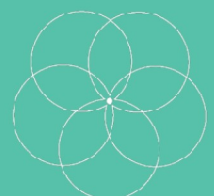
In addition to previous roles such as CEO of the National Mental Health Commission and Director-General of ACT Health, Dr Brown was recently a Commissioner for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, where she amplified the voices of veterans and families impacted by suicide and mental ill health.

As Chair, Dr Brown says she will prioritise tackling several key issues: embedding an equitable, inclusive and human rights-based approach to care and support; overhauling the mental health system's foundations to build a world-class system; and matching funding to the scale of the problem and community expectation.

"We are at a turning point for mental health in Australia – particularly as we draw closer to the federal election. There's a lot to do, but by working together, and providing opportunities to strengthen the impact and influence of the entire mental health sector, we can create a system that truly gives everyone the chance to thrive."

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"I'm honoured to take on this role as Chair and am committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to drive meaningful change across the sector, including two new peak bodies, the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance and Mental Health Carers Australia, who will ensure the voice of lived experience is at the heart of our work as we build a mental health system that truly serves every Australian."

The Board of Mental Health Australia reflects the sector's diversity, including people with lived experience and their families and carers, who play a pivotal role in shaping inclusive policies and reforms. The Board has also appointed Mr Mark Orr AM, CEO of Flourish Australia, as the Deputy Chair of Mental Health Australia.

Mr Orr, who has been the Interim Chair of the Mental Health Australia Board, says Dr Brown's extensive experience in governance, as well as her strong connectivity across government and with key decision-makers, were important factors when appointing her as Chair.

"Dr Brown's experience in the mental health sector, experience in leadership and governance, and advocating for reform demonstrates her unwavering commitment to inclusive and equitable services that support people's mental health recovery," Mr Orr said.

"As Chair, Dr Brown's leadership will be pivotal in ensuring that Mental Health Australia continues to drive essential system reforms that are codesigned with people with lived experience and families, carers and kin."

Mental Health Australia has long been a driving force for reform, advocating for policies that prioritise wellbeing and reduce disparities in mental health care to ensure all Australians can access the support they deserve.

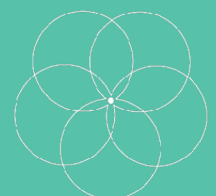
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### **About Mental Health Australia:**

Mental Health Australia is the national, independent peak body for the mental health sector. For over 25 years, the organisation has united voices across the mental health sector and advocated for policies that improve mental health.

As an independent, national peak body, Mental Health Australia represents over 140 diverse members, including service providers, professional bodies, researchers, and organisations supporting people with lived experiences of mental health challenges. The organisation drives national policy reform, advocates for systemic changes to improve mental health outcomes, and works to unite and strengthen the sector, fostering a future where mental health care is equitable, accessible, and inclusive for all.



## **About Dr Peggy Brown AO, Chair of Mental Health Australia:**

Dr Peggy Brown AO is the Chair of Mental Health Australia and a leader in the mental health and healthcare sectors. A Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), Dr Brown is deeply committed to working closely with people with lived experience, as well as their families, carers, and supporters, to co-design contemporary mental health services.

As one of three Commissioners for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, Dr Brown championed the inclusion of lived experience to drive meaningful change and improve mental health outcomes. Her career includes prominent roles such as Chief Executive Officer of the National Mental Health Commission, Director-General of ACT Health, and Chief Psychiatrist in Queensland, the ACT, and the Northern Territory. She is currently the Chief Medical Officer for Medilinks, an organisation supporting veterans, and sits on the Board of Wellways.

Renowned for her strategic vision and advocacy, Dr Brown remains a leading voice in shaping policies and programmes prioritising equity, inclusion, and the wellbeing of Australia's most vulnerable populations.

