



## MEDIA RELEASE

27 November 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL REPORT CARD ON MENTAL HEALTH DETAILS A LITANY OF DISAPPOINTMENTS

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) is calling on governments across Australia to commit to real and meaningful reform of mental health programs and services, following today's release of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual independent report by the National Mental Health Commission.

Speaking after the launch of the Commission's 2013 National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, MHCA CEO Frank Quinlan lamented the lack of sustained government action on mental health reform, right across the country.

"After the pledges COAG made in 2011, it is astounding that COAG failed to respond to last year's Report Card in time for this report," Mr Quinlan said.

"What is most disappointing is that the mental health sector stands ready to change, but that change must be led by governments. Such delays are unacceptable."

In particular, the Commission's 2013 Report Card suggests a need for:

- greater leadership from COAG on mental health reform
- adequate and efficient investment in mental health to match the burden of disease
- filling the gaping holes in data about mental health
- work towards closing the gap in indigenous mental health
- a commitment to shared targets and indicators for improving mental health systems and services
- a commitment to address employment, accommodation, workplace participation and other major factors affecting mental wellbeing outside of the health system.

"We call on the new Australian Government to revitalise this clearly stalled process and get mental health reform moving again. We must see the sustained systemic reform our mental health system needs over the course of the next decade to improve the lives of millions of Australians living with mental illness," Mr Quinlan said.

"We welcome the Australian Government's commitment to a far reaching review of mental health, and call on governments across the country to get behind the Commission's review of the mental health sector. With enough time, resources and, most importantly, the right terms of reference, the Commission's review can set immediate priorities for action.

"This is an opportunity for the new Australian Government to take the lead and revitalise the process of mental health reform."

**Media Contact: Chris Wagner – 0434 378 939**