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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CROSSROADS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS SYSTEMIC FAILURE IN MENTAL HEALTH

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) renewed its call for a new vision for the mental health sector following the release of *'Crossroads'*, a report commissioned by Reachout.com by Inspire Foundation.

"This new report highlights the fundamental failure of our current mental health system," MHCA CEO Frank Quinlan said at the launch of the report this morning.

"It is clear from this report, and from many others, that Australia invests too much at the acute end of the mental health system, and not enough on early intervention and prevention. In addition to this, we routinely fail to monitor and assess the impact of our spending.

"The time has come for a completely new vision for mental health in Australia. We want, quite simply, the best mental health system in the world. It's time for change.

"Reform needs to be achieved on a number of fronts if we are to realise this vision.

"Firstly, we need to define what an optimal mental health system should look like. A system that is focused on meaningful participation; that prioritises promotion, prevention and early intervention; that is recovery oriented; that is seamlessly integrated across services and programs; and, that is accessible, effective and efficient."

"Secondly, we need to detail the radical reforms that will be required over the next decade to move us from where we are now toward this new vision. Australian history is already littered with incremental, ad hoc and stop gap measures in the arena of mental health.

"Finally, a priority task is to identify major gaps in our existing services, and investments that are not currently yielding the best outcomes. As noted in *'Crossroads'*, many of the people currently entering the system at the acute end could be diverted from future high cost services with appropriate investment in early intervention and prevention.

"It is also clear that people who have entered the system with complex needs would be better served by much closer integration across existing programs and across the multiple sectors they come into contact with."

MHCA is the peak non-government body representing the mental health sector in Australia. Our mission is for Australia to have the best mental health system in the world.

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