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## 40% OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES LOSE STAFF AMID FUNDING UNCERTAINTY

A national survey of not-for-profit mental health agencies has found funding uncertainty is having an alarming impact on services.

The survey undertaken by Mental Health Australia in late November found:

- 40% report they have already experienced loss of staff
- 46% report a difficulty attracting new staff
- 53% report a reduction in services to clients
- 81% report a decline in staff morale
- 85% report a loss of trust in government amongst management and staff
- 56% report they have had no communications regarding the future of their Commonwealth funding after June 2015, and
- 91% of organisations said if they did not find out about their funding, they would need to reduce staff, 88% said they would need to reduce services.

“The results of this survey are worse than we anticipated. Indeed, 73% of respondents said they would be forced to reduce local options for consumers. That’s deeply concerning,” Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said today.

“Similar uncertainty last year saw 40% of not-for-profit mental health providers report they were forced to reduce services. We can’t have that happening again.

“They’ve told us that, once again, this lack of certainty is affecting the morale of staff and clients, and resulting in a reduction of confidence.”

The data comes as the National Mental Health Commission this week provided their Report into the Review of Existing Mental Health Services and Programmes.

“We understand the Government’s response to this very important Review is currently being considered. However, we urge the Commonwealth to provide assurances on funding so that the current level of service provision can continue in the meantime,” Mr Quinlan said.

“We want to see consistency of funding arrangements outside election and budget cycles as well as a commitment to a ten-year program of reform for mental health in Australia.”

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