



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# LONG TERM MENTAL HEALTH REFORM WAITS FOR NMHC REVIEW

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) was tonight encouraged to see the Commonwealth Government meet its pre-election commitments to mental health.

“Tonight’s budget provides funding for the mental health related election commitments of the Coalition, as well as providing certainty for the Review of Mental Health Services and Programmes by the National Mental Health Commission,” MHCA CEO Frank Quinlan said following the announcement of the budget.

“We welcome the expected funding commitment to youth mental health, Headspace, the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Programme, and the 12 month extension of funding to the Personal Helpers and Mentors Programme.

“We are concerned about some of the measures, and the long term impact they may have on the mental wellbeing of the nation – especially young people.

“For example, a GP co-payment may discourage people with early signs of mental illness from seeking help quickly. We know that 70% of people with a mental illness do not currently seek help, but we also know the earlier we intervene the better.

“In addition, while we are keen to find ways to encourage people with mental illness, including those with a psychosocial disability, to seek employment, implementation of any new system should not see people removed from the Disability Support Pension without an achievable plan for their transition into work – including mental health treatment and support programs, skills development and training, and workplace reform.

“During this period of substantial reform we must ensure that existing services are maintained or new services established, so that vulnerable people are not left without support while systemic change is implemented.”

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