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## MENTAL HEALTH REFORM STARTS TODAY

Mental Health Australia has today welcomed the Australian Government's Response to the Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services.

"Reform starts today," Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said. "It will take considerable effort to achieve successful mental health reform, the time for review has now finished and implementation can begin."

"The Government has provided us with a workable framework for systemic change, and realising this vision will now depend on the contribution of all players, not governments alone. The mental health sector stands ready to play its role as we start the reform journey.

"We are particularly heartened to see the Government adopting a 'stepped-care' approach to mental health, recognising the increasing access and intensity needs for the millions of Australians who live with mental illness every year, depending on their individual care requirements."

In addition, Mental Health Australia has acknowledged some of the positive aspects of the Government's framework for mental health reform:

- A recognition of the importance of consumer and carer participation in the roll out of the new mental health framework
- An undertaking to provide funding clarity and transition arrangements for community-based service providers and their clients by December 2015
- A major focus on digital mental health
- Investment in much needed capacity building for Primary Health Networks, to assist them identify the right mix of services at the local level for people with mental illness

"We are ready to work with the Government and the sector on specific implications for service and program delivery. Carefully managing and communicating change, and ensuring new services are well established before old services are withdrawn will be essential to success," Mr Quinlan said.

"In addition, we are keen to better understand how Government plans to fund various elements of this package, what targets and indicators will be in place to demonstrate whether we are making a difference, and the way mental health reform will be integrated across various sectors like housing, education and employment."

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