

Big issues require big commitments, and even bigger dollars – Mental Health Australia welcomes the 2021 Federal Budget

Mental Health Australia has tonight welcomed the 2021 Federal Budget, at a time when the mental health of our nation has never seen such need, nor experienced such a willingness to address the issues and challenges at hand.

“Over the last decade or more, our mental health ecosystem has advocated tirelessly for systemic reform, for change and ultimately for the right to be heard,” said Mental Health Australia CEO Dr Leanne Beagley.

“At the heart of such advocacy has been those with lived experience of mental ill health, and their families and carers. These courageous, persistent and persuasive voices have become critical to ensuring all governments not only listen, but act to improve our mental health system.

“Tonight, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg’s Budget speech identified a record \$2.3 billion will be invested in Australia’s mental health over the next four years.

“There is no doubt this is real action.

“The numbers are big, and the commitments are certainly welcomed, but we also know that to tackle and deliver true national mental health reform will mean big commitments on many fronts, not just in health, and not just at a federal level.

“There are also of course gaps, and there are of course more questions to ask and we will do so over the next days and weeks.

“At Mental Health Australia, where our focus is always on national systemic reform across the entire lifespan and across the care continuum from prevention to acute clinical treatment, we see these Budget announcements as the start of what must become a national wave of true mental health reform.

“After decades of under-investment across the entire ecosystem, new mental health funding can sometimes be like rain after a long drought — it is welcomed but gets absorbed into the dry earth so quickly that it seems to disappear. It’s only when there is consistent rain that a drought truly breaks.”

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