



29 March 2022 | For immediate release

Despite the missed opportunities, Mental Health Australia welcomes the 2022 Federal Budget.

Mental Health Australia has tonight welcomed the 2022 Federal Budget, recognising extended investment in the sector at a time when Australians mental health is and should be the nation's number one priority.

“While the 2022 Federal Budget provides a welcome investment in mental health and suicide prevention of \$658 million that will enhance the current mental health system it is not investment on the scale required to sustain momentum for mental health reform,” said Mental Health Australia CEO Dr Leanne Beagley

“The sector will welcome increased funding of existing services supporting young people and those with eating disorders, and also for those at the point of real distress through expanded Lifeline services, but will be disappointed with the ongoing lack of reform and innovation in the government's vision for the mental health system.

“Funding for social and emotional wellbeing services through a funding partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a stand-out investment in an otherwise inadequate landscape.

“The extension of telehealth services as part of the 10 year primary health care plan in an important investment for rural and regional communities but further expansion of primary care to support people with mental health issues is limited to MBS changes for case conferencing and increased access to psychiatrists via a GP.

“Workforce investment ignores the community non-government services sector and there is no additional funding for psychosocial services particularly in expanding the workforce and building the pipeline for new workers.

“The suicide prevention investments will not be sufficient to make a significant impact upon suicide rates in line with Mental Health Australia's campaign to reduce suicides by 25 per cent by 2025. This includes little support for vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians or the impacting on the social determinants that serve to dismantle mental health and wellbeing.

“Unfortunately, the budget just doesn't deliver in the transformational way the sector has been calling for.

“Key areas such as no psychosocial investment with gaps in the community workforce and the omission of demonstrative and crucial lived experience leadership is noticeable in its absence.

“The Productivity Commission Inquiry told us that the cost to the Australian economy of mental illness and suicide is estimated to be about \$70 billion per year. It estimated addressing its priority recommendations would cost \$2.4 billion per year and implementing all recommendations would cost between \$3.5 and \$4.2 billion per year. In the context of the current cost to the Australian economy of mental illness, this size of investment seems like a drop in the ocean. But let's be clear – the 2022-23 Budget does not come close to providing this drop in the ocean.”

Media contact: Nikki Hogan 0402 528 022 or nikki.hogan@mhaustralia.org