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## THE TIME FOR TALK IS OVER - IT'S TIME FOR ACTION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Ahead of the COAG Leaders Retreat, the mental health sector has **written to the Prime Minister and First Ministers** calling for urgent action on reforms COAG agreed to in 2012.

"In 2012 COAG agreed to adopt clear targets and indicators for improving mental health and to develop a fully funded national agreement on mental health reform, and yet we are still waiting for action," said Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan.

"As Federal Health Minister the Hon Sussan Ley MP has indicated, Australia needs an agreement on mental health that is 'national', 'coordinated' and 'binding'.

"We have waited too long for such an agreement. The system is in crisis right now, and we need action; not after the next budget, not after the next election, but starting now with a commitment from our leaders.

"From the recent report by the National Mental Health Commission and the subsequent announcement of a Mental Health Expert Reference Group (ERG), to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the Federation White Paper process, the case for action between governments and across various government departments is clear.

"The time for talk is over, it's time for action."

### The open letter identifies two clear priorities for action.

First, for governments to act on their commitments of 2012 by urgently implementing national, whole-of-life targets for improving mental health outcomes that reflect the aspirations of consumers and carers, backed up with indicators to demonstrate progress and performance.

Second, for governments to urgently develop and agree on a fully funded National Mental Health Agreement which, at a minimum:

- includes specific responsibilities across portfolios including health, social and community services, employment and education
- boosts investment in early intervention and prevention
- expands and streamlines services in the community, close to need, and
- guarantees an acceptable standard of services to Australians who experience mental illness and their carers.

A copy of the letter can be downloaded at <https://mhaustralia.org/general/open-joint-letter-prime-minister-and-first-ministers-mental-health-reform>

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