



Mental Health
Australia
Media release

Mental Health Australia welcomes the Federal Budget as it lays the foundation for future reforms

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CEO Dr Leanne Beagley said that while Mental Health Australia welcomes areas of investment across a range of social determinants, it is not a strong mental health budget.

“This budget is focussed on delivering election commitments and it has done so in a range of important and welcome areas,” said Dr Beagley.

“If we were looking for reform in mental health, we are left wanting in this first post-election Budget. But if we are looking for broader structural reform in the areas that we have been advocating for in relation to social determinants then there are some extremely positive signs: housing, First Nations health and wellbeing, cost of living, rural and regional health, aged care, climate, and the safety of women and children.

“We expect that these investments will build hope in the community for future action in areas that people tell us worry them the most,” said Dr Beagley.

“The Housing agenda is a bold and welcome move and Mental Health Australia will be seeking to understand what measures may be put in place to provide support for disadvantaged people and particularly those with psychosocial disability to access appropriate, safe and supported accommodation.”

Dr Beagley said that Mental Health Australia’s recently released “*Report to the Nation*” identified that First Nations people rated themselves lowest for their mental health and wellbeing.

“We are pleased to see that along with strong commitment to closing the health gap there is recognition that as the Uluru statement begins to be implemented there will be a need for expanding and prioritising mental health, well-being, and suicide prevention for First Nations communities,” said Dr Beagley.



“The *Report to the Nation* also identified the LGBTQIA+ community as being at significant risk for mental ill health, distress and suicide. We welcome the investment announced to consult with this community about barriers accessing health care.

“Whilst the work to stabilise the NDIA is welcome, the fact that psychosocial services funding finishes at the end of June 2023 means that a funding ‘cliff’ already pushed out year after year continues to create significant uncertainty. Reforming the system for mental health within the community sector still seems a long way off.

“We welcome measures that respond to current issues and crises such mental health support in flood affected areas, the response to the interim report on Veterans suicide and school-based funding for the mental health of students following the disruption of COVID.

“We note foundational investments in 12 perinatal mental health centres, new headspace centres and the continuation of telepsychiatry. These extend existing services as does the National Ice Action Plan which has been extended for a further three years.

“We are excited by the investment of \$1 million to conduct a review of Australia’s multicultural policy settings to ‘further strengthen social cohesion’ and we look forward to informing that work through the Embrace Multicultural Project,” said Dr Beagley.

Dr Beagley did express frustration that there appears to be a view in the new government that the mental health sector is comfortable with the range of existing spending initiatives in mental health and that further investment is apparently not urgent.

“Whilst the sector has welcomed early conversations about what is needed in the mental health sector, we need to see the reform we have been advocating for,” said Dr Beagley.

Dr Beagley added that the budget sets strong and very positive expectations that the Government will deliver measures that impact on and improve the wellbeing of all Australians into the future.

Ends.

The 2022 *Report to the Nation* is available [here](#).

Dr Leanne Beagley, CEO, Mental Health Australia will be available for comment/interview from 6.30am – 10am, Wednesday 26 October.

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