



Mental Health
Australia
Media release

Mental health left behind in Federal Government's pre-election budget pitch

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The country's peak mental health body, Mental Health Australia, is disappointed that mental health is missing from the Federal Budget.

The 2025-26 Federal Budget shows no commitment to improving access to mental health supports for the Australian community.

Australia is facing enormous pressures on our collective mental health and wellbeing. One in 5 people will experience a mental health condition in a given year, prevalence has doubled for young people in recent yearsⁱ, and up to 22% of 5-year-olds are now showing vulnerability to mental health issues in their very first year of school.ⁱⁱ

"Despite the rising need for greater investment in mental health, this budget suggests that mental health is far from the front of this government's mind" says Mental Health Australia CEO Carolyn Nikoloski.

"While there are some piecemeal investments, this budget seriously lacks the level of mental health reform and investment that the Australian community expects. Everyone in Australia should be able to access the mental health care they need, regardless of their income or where they live."

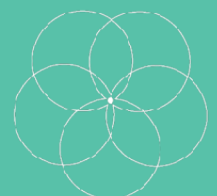
Mental Health Australia welcomes the Australian Government's broader investments to strengthen Medicare, boost the primary care workforce and cut the price of medicines. However, without additional investments to make the mental health system more accessible and connected, the community will still not be able to access the supports they need.

"Currently, the affordability and accessibility of mental health support ends on the other side of the GP's door. While there is a bold plan to get people accessing bulk-billed GP care, this does not go far enough for the 1 in 5 Australians facing a mental health challenge in a given year," Ms Nikoloski says.

"We had hoped to see commitments to support people's mental health following the Medicare bulk-billing investment. This remains a vital missing step that needs to be urgently addressed."

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With focus now inevitably shifting towards the upcoming Federal Election, Mental Health Australia will continue to pursue commitments from all sides of politics to deliver pathways to accessible, affordable mental health care at a time when Australia needs it most.

“We have made a bold pitch to parties and candidates to create free pathways to mental health care for everyone under 25. With mental health being the most common reason someone visits their GP, we need to ensure that families and young people can access mental health care as soon as they need it, particularly during a cost-of-living crisis.”

“With young people experiencing particularly stark increases in distress, we cannot afford to leave any barriers in their path to support and care,” Ms Nikoloski added.

In announcing the landmark Medicare investment, Prime Minister Albanese said that “people deserve ambition from their government.” This country now needs ambitious mental health investment to change the trajectory of mental health for a generation of Australians.

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ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (2008) and **National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing** (2023)

ⁱⁱ Goodyear, M., et al. (2024). **Scoping child mental health workforce capability: Final report**. Emerging Minds, Adelaide.

