



Mental Health
Australia
Media release

Mental Health Australia welcomes Coalition commitment for youth mental health

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The country's peak mental health body Mental Health Australia welcomes the Coalition's election commitment to increase youth mental health support and calls on all political parties and candidates to prioritise mental health in this Federal Election.

Mental Health Australia has welcomed the Coalition's focus on youth mental health, as pledged in their Opposition Budget reply speech. This commitment firmly places mental health on the federal election agenda and promises new funding towards addressing the mental health of young people under a potential Coalition government.

This commitment recognises the vital importance of mental health services, as we tackle the cost-of-living crisis, housing pressures and job insecurity. We call on all political parties and candidates to strongly prioritise mental health in their election commitments over coming weeks.

With two-thirds of mental health issues emerging by age 25, and young people reporting cost is the most significant barrier to accessing mental health care, Mental Health Australia has been urging all political parties to commit to free mental health care for all children and young people as part of their election platforms.

Rates of mental ill-health among young people increased by 50% between 2007 and 2022, so that now two out of five young people experience a mental health condition in a given year. Recent research also indicates that 22% of five-year-olds show vulnerability to mental health issues in their first year of school.

"Too many families and young people in Australia are forced to choose between essential mental health care and basic living costs" said Carolyn Nikoloski, CEO of Mental Health Australia.

"At a time when people need support the most, one in five people delayed or did not see a health professional for their mental health due to cost in 2023-24."

Mental health remains a major priority for voters, with polling conducted for Mental Health Australia showing 75% of Australian voters think the government needs to do more on mental health, and 63% of voters would be more inclined to vote for a party committed to address accessibility of mental health services.

P 02 6285 3100
E info@mhaustralia.org
W: www.mhaustralia.org

mhaustralia.org
Mental Health Australia Ltd
ABN 57 600 066 635



In this context, the Coalition has committed \$400 million for youth mental health if elected, including expanding services for young Australians experiencing chronic or complex mental health conditions and increasing supports in regional and outer-metropolitan areas. While more information is needed to understand how this commitment can address cost and access barriers, this pledge is a meaningful start towards the future all young people deserve.

Mental Health Australia has outlined a range of solutions that an incoming government could immediately implement to ensure all children and young people can access the range and breadth of supports they need to thrive, and to change the trajectory of child and youth mental health in Australia.

We encourage all parties to consider these community and sector-driven priorities in developing their election platforms, and Mental Health Australia stands ready, willing and able to guide design of further investment proposals.

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Media Contact: Emma Greeney, Director, Policy and Advocacy 0437 891 671

For more information on Mental Health Australia's policy solutions for children and young people, see: **'Free mental health support for children and young people: Our case for change – Federal Election 2025'**.

