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## More Certainty for Australians Living with Mental Illness

Australians living with mental illness, and those who care for them, are resting easier today knowing the community based mental health services they rely on have been provided greater funding certainty.

This certainty comes following the announcement by the Assistant Minister for Social Services, the Hon Mitch Fifield, regarding mental health programs supported by the Department of Social Security.

“This is a very welcome announcement,” Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said today.

“With the welcome, but complex reforms associated with the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and as we await the National Mental Health Commission’s Review of Mental Health Services and Programmes, any certainty that can be provided to people who participate in these programs is a very positive development.

“The programs being extended include important services like the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program and the Mental Health Respite: Carer Support program, which we know is having a real and meaningful impact in our community.”

“The announced 12 month extension of funding will allow organisations to retain both a highly skilled workforce and community based services that many have come to rely on. We know from a survey we conducted last year that funding uncertainty creates a very difficult environment for employees and employers as well as the people who use the services every day.

“Today’s announcement will ease some of that uncertainty.

“These programs make a real difference to the many thousands of Australians who are living with a mental illness, and the people who care for them. We have been calling for this funding extension, and we are delighted that the Government has listened.

Just last week more than 85 Mental Health Australia members visited Parliament House to convey their concerns to government regarding funding uncertainty – including a number of programs funded by the Health Department that remain uncertain. In addition, they urged the release of the National Mental Health Commission’s Review of Mental Health Services and Programmes and sought a commitment to a ten year cross party commitment to reforming the mental health system.

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