Mental Health Australia

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The Hon Tony Abbott MP

Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia Australian Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

23 March 2015

Dear Prime Minister

We, the undersigned, are writing to implore the Australian Government to take urgent action to ensure continuity of services and programs for Australians who live with mental illness, and those who care for them.

Right now, hundreds of contracts for community based mental health services and programs funded by the Department of Health are due to end 30 June 2015.

While we understand the Government will be formulating its response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Services and Programmes, the continued uncertainty is now resulting in staff attrition and service wind down. This issue has now reached crisis point.

Our Mental Health Parliamentary Advocacy Day on 11 February 2015 brought this to the attention of the Parliament, with our members receiving a good hearing from many parliamentarians, including members of Government, but as yet we have not received any definitive advice regarding the future of programs. Some agencies have indicated that without this advice, they will have to give staff notice of termination of employment in a matter of days. This ongoing uncertainty is causing a huge disruption to organisations and, increasingly, deep anxiety amongst the people they serve.

Following the Mental Health Parliamentary Advocacy Day we were delighted that Minister Fifield was able to provide some measure of certainty for community based mental health services and programs funded by the Department of Social Services.

We thank you for giving this matter your urgent attention and providing certainty for the vulnerable Australians who depend on these services.

Cc: The Hon Sussan Ley MP, Minister for Health

Sincerely



Mental Health Australia

Frank Quinlan, CEO Mental Health Australia





Chris Tanti, CEO headspace



Arthur Papkotsias, CEO Neami National



Velen Clipstenser

Helen Christensen, Executive Director Black Dog Institute





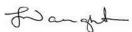
Sue Murray, CEO Suicide Prevention Australia





Tony Holland, CEO OzHelp Foundation





Gerry Naughtin, CEO Mind Australia



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Jaelea Skehan, Director Hunter Institute of Mental Health



Tom Baxter, CEO Ostara Australia





David Meldrum, Executive Director Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia



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Jonathan Nicholas, CEO ReachOut



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Jack Heath, CEO SANE Australia





Brendan Maher, General Manager R U OK? Limited



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Adjunct Prof Kim Ryan, CEO Australian College of Mental Health Nurses



Jane Henty, Executive Officer Mental Health Carers ARAFMI Australia



Wilf Rath

Wilfred Rath, CEO Richmond Fellowship ACT



Joy Gillett, CEO Australian Rotary Health



Nic Bolto, Managing Director Olympus Solutions



John Malone, Executive Director Aftercare



Dr Cathy Kezelman AM, President Adults Surviving Child Abuse



Dr Richard Oades, CEO Pathways Southwest



Adrian Buckley, CEO Pathways



BAKitchene

Betty Kitchener AM, CEO Mental Health First Aid Australia





Annette Tubnor, CEO Family Support Newcastle





Joe beellow

Joe Calleja, CEO Richmond Fellowship WA



faborendge Jennifer Beveridge, CEO Eating Disorders Victoria



WADO

Kim Koop, CEO Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria (VICSERV)



Jenna Bateman, CEO Mental Health Coordinating Council



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Chris Jones, CEO Anglicare Tasmania



Marielle Me

Marcelle Mogg, CEO Catholic Social Services Australia

connecting communities



Lyn Morgain, CEO cohealth



Sam Refshauge, CEO Batyr Foundation

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Michelle Graeber, CEO Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria



Jenny Smith, CEO Council to Homeless Persons



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Christine Morgan, CEO Butterfly Foundation





Emma King, CEO Victorian Council of Social Service



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Vernon Knight, Executive Director Mallee Family Care





Melody Edwardson, CEO Queensland Alliance



Janne McMahon, Chair and Executive Officer Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia)



South

Terri Smith, CEO PANDA





Suzanne Greenwood, CEO Catholic Health Australia



Rod Astbury, CEO WA Association for Mental Health



Ross Womersley, Executive Director South Australian Council of Social Service



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Linda Richardson, Senior Manager Mental Health Services Partners in Recovery, Perth Central & East Metro



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Debbie Childs, Executive Director Mental Health Carers Arafmi (WA)



Lorrae Loud, CEO Lamp Inc





Peter Ruzyla, CEO EACH



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Gen- Inaben.

George Tambassis, National President The Pharmacy Guild of Australia



E. Low Liz Crowther, CEO MI Fellowship



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Julien McDonald, Executive Director Tandem



Christopher John, CEO StandBy Response Service



Maria Brett, CEO Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia



Darra Murphy, President Australian Society for Psychological Medicine



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Rob Ramjan AM, CEO Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW



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Vivienne Miller, Director TheMHS Learning Network

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Sam Davidson-Fuller, Executive Officer Mental Illness Education ACT

Relationships Australia.

Alison Brook, CEO Relationships Australia



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Lyn English NMHCCF Consumer Co-Chair

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Elida Meadows NMHCCF Carer Co-Chair



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Glenys Wilkinson, CEO Australian Association of Social Workers



John Me Grath

John McGrath AM, Chairman Mental Health Professionals Network







Clare Guilfoyle, CEO Grow



Victorian Transcultural

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Daryl Oehm, Manager Victorian Transcultural Mental Health



Dalane Drexler, Executive Officer ACT Mental Health Consumer Network



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS 1 2014

Christopher John, CEO United Synergies

Mental Health Coalition

Geoff Harris, Executive Director Mental Health Coalition of SA



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Julien McDonald, President Australian BPD Foundation



Joanne Toohey, A/CEO The Benevolent Society



Trudy Hanson, Manager National Association for Loss & Grief (NSW) Inc



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Sally Gibson, Executive Officer Women's Mental Health Network Victoria

Queensland Council of Social Service

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Valmae Rose, A/CEO Queensland Council of Social Service



Jen Dalitz, CEO Peer Support Australia



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Elida Meadows, A/CEO Mental Health Council of Tasmania

