

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



Sue Murray, CEO
Suicide Prevention Australia



Tom Baxter, CEO
Ostara Australia



Chris Tanti, CEO
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Tony Holland, CEO
OzHelp Foundation



David Meldrum, Executive Director
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Jonathan Nicholas, CEO
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Jaelea Skehan, Director
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Jack Heath, CEO
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Emma King, CEO
Victorian Council of Social Service





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Guild of Australia

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Elida Meadows

Elida Meadows
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Sam Davidson-Fuller

Sam Davidson-Fuller,
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John McGrath

John McGrath AM, Chairman
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Geoff Harris, Executive Director
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Sally Gibson, Executive Officer
Women's Mental Health
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