



MEDIA RELEASE

23 June 2010

Mental Health sector writes to Rudd calling for urgent investment in services

Australia's leading health and mental health organisations will present a letter on Thursday to the Rudd Government calling for increased investment in mental health.

The letter calls on the Rudd Government to:

- End unequal care for mental and physical health;
- Provide ready access to care for Australians with mental ill-health;
- Develop and implement an action plan to achieve mental health reform; and
- Increase investment in mental health to provide more services for children, young people and older adults.

The letter is the result of increasing concern by the mental health community that the Government's new health funding announcements may exacerbate key structural barriers to reform in mental health.

Currently, mental health's share of the health budget stands at 6%, significantly less than both its share of the health burden (14%) and the recommendation of the 2006 Senate inquiry into mental health, which called for funding of between 9-12%.

The sector is also very concerned that the new funding announced in the CoAG health agreement represents just 2% of the \$5.4 billion of new health funding and there are no requirements for States and Territories to commit to new mental health services in sub acute or community care.

The letter to Mr Rudd calls on the Prime Minister to use the historic opportunity of the current reform agenda to reshape the future of our failing mental health system.

Signatories to the letter include: Professor Pat McGorry, Mental Health Council of Australia, Australian Psychological Society, AMA, AGPN, Inspire, Brain & Mind Research Institute, Lifeline Australia, SANE, Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, beyondblue, Carers Australia, ANU Centre for Mental Health Research, headspace, Multicultural Mental Health Australia, Arafmi Australia, Australian Rotary Health, Menzies Centre for Health Policy, Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Anglicare Australia, Suicide Prevention Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, QLD Alliance, Schizophrenia Fellowship, National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum, Mental Health Foundation Australia and many more...

Where: Committee Room 2S1

When: Thursday 24 June, 11.30 am – 12.00 noon.

Speaker: Professor Pat McGorry, Australian of the Year

Media welcome – photo opportunity and interviews. Copies of the letter to the PM available from 11.30 am.

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