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MEDIA RELEASE

New study into mental health disorders in young Australians shows urgent need for funding and reform

A new study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* reveals that anxiety and depressive disorders are the leading cause of disability in young Australians.

This latest finding is further evidence that the Federal Government must immediately fulfil its election commitment to make mental health a major second term agenda.

The Government should also ensure that appropriate attention is given to the disability related effects of mental illness in the long term Disability Care and Support Scheme currently being looked at by the Productivity Commission.

Mental disorders largely affect young Australians, however the impact of untreated mental illness is felt by everyone.

Last year the Minister for Mental Health, Mark Butler, travelled across the country hearing first hand from mental health consumers and carers about what is urgently needed. While there were a number of issues raised, including both what is working now and what is not, there were items that were consistently raised at session after session, regardless of location. These included (in no particular order):

1. Stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness and their carers;
2. Minority group issues, including Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), and others;
3. Dual diagnosis, co morbidity, physical and mental illness;
4. Integrated services, including housing, employment, disability services, and others;
5. Workforce needs;
6. The need for a mental health consumer peak body, and a carer counterpart; and
7. Enhancing community capacity.

This Government has before it more reports, inquiries and first hand evidence about the impact of mental illness than any previous administration and they must address the chronic underfunding and lack of services as a priority.

The Government has said it is committed to delivering mental health reform and ensuring all Australians have access to affordable and appropriate mental health care.

This latest research highlighting the impact of anxiety and depression in young people adds to the weight of evidence that government action is urgently needed to address the chronic underfunding in mental health services.

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