

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Priorities for action on mental health in NSW

Details sent to NSW MPs outlining steps needed to turn around deficits in the mental health system.

The Mental Health Coordinating Council has laid out its road map for action to create a mental health system that ensures people living with mental health conditions get the services they need.

MHCC details its priorities in a Position Paper *NSW Parliamentary Briefing - Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health*, sent today to members on all sides of the NSW Parliament.

As a priority, the MHCC Position Paper urges the NSW Government to lock down an agreement over funding for mental health with the Commonwealth Government, MHCC CEO Carmel Tebbutt says.

“We urge NSW to lead the nation by increasing its investment in mental health in the forthcoming NSW Budget and committing to a new National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement,” Ms Tebbutt says.

NSW is doing much right, but there are key gaps and barriers which need to be fixed so people get the support they need, when they need it rather than waiting for a crisis.

“Turning this deficit around will not happen overnight but the Productivity Commission report provides a critical opportunity for the NSW Government to work with the Australian Government to meet the mental health needs of our community.”

“It is now time for governments to act on these reforms, so that people living with a mental illness can expect the same sort of support that someone living with a physical illness receives.”

This is particularly pressing for an estimated 46,000 in NSW who fall into the ‘missing middle’ and are not receiving the support they need.

“In NSW, steps can be taken to expand psychosocial supports for the thousands of people who need more care than a GP can offer alone,” Ms Tebbutt says.

“There are services delivered by community mental health organisations that would support people in the ‘missing middle’ with daily living skills, access to education or employment and participation in social and recreation activities.”

Evidence clearly demonstrates that people accessing psychosocial rehabilitation and support programs and services, stay well for longer, have more chance of completing their educational goals, gaining and sustaining employment and experiencing social participation and achieving their aspiration.

Without adequate community mental health programs and services, provided in the main by not-for-profit community organisations, there will be an unsustainable, growing demand on our hospitals for acute and crisis care.

“To rebalance and reorient the entire mental health system to improve the lives of those missing out on services will be complex but a number of steps can be taken right away,” Ms Tebbutt says.

For more details on steps NSW can take right away see the [MHCC Position Paper](#) and one-page [Key Recommendations](#). Both documents are available on our website mhcc.org.au/news

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