

MEDIA RELEASE

Spending up, but more needed for people living with complex mental health conditions

Tuesday 1 February 2022: Spending on mental health services delivered in the community by non-government organisations has increased slightly in New South Wales, the most recent Productivity Commission [Report on Government Services 2022](#) shows.

The latest figures reveal spending on services delivered by community managed mental health organisations made up 8.5% of the total mental health budget, up by 1.1% on the previous reporting period.

Mental Health Coordinating Council CEO Carmel Tebbutt says this is an encouraging trend with significant evidence pointing to quality services delivered in the community providing better outcomes, while at the same time taking pressure off other parts of the health system.

“People living with enduring mental health conditions can live well in the community when they have the right mix of medical, psychosocial rehabilitation and support services,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“Currently too many people have to rely on emergency departments and admission to acute or inpatient facilities because of a lack of services in the community that could intervene early.

“The recent [Productivity Commission report into mental health](#) showed one of the greatest priorities in mental health reform is to increase services to meet the needs of people living with mental health conditions in the community.”

Despite the AIHW figures showing a small increase in spending on mental health delivered in the community, NSW continues to have one of the lowest per capita spends in Australia allocated to support for people living with ongoing mental health conditions.

NSW spends a larger proportion of its mental health budget on acute mental health services than any other state in Australia.

“The Productivity Commission report showed there is a need for increased investment in a greater number of services and programs provided in the community by organisations with a strong local presence,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“The long anticipated National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement currently being negotiated between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments must include timeframes and funding for the rollout of psychosocial support programs, delivered by community managed organisations.”

“The Australian Government promised to release this agreement in November last year and people living with mental health conditions are still waiting for the services they need to prevent crises, stay out of hospital and stay well.”

For media queries or to request an interview with Carmel Tebbutt, contact Lara Cole on lara.c@mhcc.org.au or 0421 202 64