

MEDIA RELEASE

Top four investment priorities for mental health in New South Wales

Wednesday 2 February 2022: Mental Health Coordinating Council is calling for the New South Wales Government to address the following top four mental health priorities in the upcoming NSW Budget.

- **5,000 additional housing and accommodation support packages for people living with a severe mental health condition**, delivered over four years at an additional cost of \$190 million.
- **13 new prevention and recovery services to establish a state-wide ‘Step-up-Step-down’ care program.** These services are short-term ‘homelike’ residential centres where people experiencing severe mental health issues can transition out of hospital or avoid a hospital admission when in crisis. NSW has five currently.
- **10 extra specialist youth services**, up from the five currently funded in local health districts across NSW. These would increase the availability of psychosocial support for young people to support recovery and positive change, and reduce emergency departments admissions.
- **Urgently address the significant shortages in the community-based mental health workforce** and anticipate the needs of a future mental health system, including the development of a peer workforce.

The Productivity Commission Report on Mental Health stressed that all governments need to increase overall funding, Mental Health Coordinating Council CEO Carmel Tebbutt said.

“It is critical the NSW Government address this in the forthcoming 2022-2023 NSW Budget.”

Investment in these priorities, contained in a [MHCC submission](#) to the NSW Government, would significantly improve outcomes for people living with mental health conditions across the state, and represent opportunities to maximise savings on acute hospital admissions.

“People living with mental health conditions should be able to access essential support services without having to wait for a crisis to occur before receiving assistance,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“Evidence clearly demonstrates that people accessing mental health support and rehabilitation in the community, rather than hospital, stay well for longer, avoid hospital and lead more rewarding lives.

“NSW needs to invest in a greater number of services and programs provided in the community by organisations with a strong local presence, and the agility required to respond to peoples’ needs in the right place at the right time.

To read our recommendations in full see our **NSW Budget 2022-2023 [Mental Health Investment Priorities](#)**.

For media queries or to request an interview with Carmel Tebbutt, contact Lara Cole on lara.c@mhcc.org.au or 0421 202 643