

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Mental health reform needed for people living with severe and complex mental health conditions**

**Wednesday 18 May 2022:** In the final week of the Federal Election campaign, Mental Health Coordinating Council is reminding all parties that foundations need to be put in place to reduce gaps in mental health support.

Mental Health Coordinating Council CEO Carmel Tebbutt says each year more than 150,000 Australians with the most severe and complex mental health conditions are missing out on the psychosocial supports they desperately need.

“Psychosocial supports are an incredibly important yet often overlooked and misunderstood part of the mental health system in Australia,” said Ms Tebbutt.

“Psychosocial supports play a vital role in enabling those living with severe and complex mental health conditions to maximise personal recovery, live well in their communities and experience better quality of life.”

One of the frameworks to improve service and funding gaps for psychosocial supports is laid out in the [National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement](#).

“As part of the *National Agreement*, the Federal and State Governments agreed to analysis the gap in psychosocial support services outside the NDIS for people with psychosocial disability.

“The *Agreement* sets out a timeframe for work to be carried out within the first two years. It is now some months since the *Agreement* was signed, and we look forward to work starting in earnest to identify across the country the need for psychosocial support and future funding arrangements.”

The [Productivity Commission Report on Mental Health](#), released in 2020, stressed that all governments need to increase overall funding for mental health.

“The Commission’s report showed the delivery of psychosocial supports – which includes a range of services to support people to manage daily activities and maintain social connections – has been hampered by insufficient funding arrangements and service gaps,” Ms Tebbutt said.

The Productivity Commission estimates that expanding the provision of psychosocial supports to the 154,000 people currently missing out on services could cost approximately \$610M per year.

“The gap in funding and service provision is affecting the recovery of people with mental health conditions and their families, who could benefit substantially from improved access to psychosocial supports.

“These services are also cost effective, with an evaluation of the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) showing a 24% reduction in mental health-related hospital admissions and a 51% reduction in emergency department presentations following participation in the program,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“We must work together to improve access to and delivery of psychosocial supports in Australia. As a priority, Governments should ensure that all people who have psychosocial needs arising from mental illness receive adequate psychosocial support to improve outcomes.”

**For media queries or to request an interview with Carmel Tebbutt**, contact Lara Cole on [lara.c@mhcc.org.au](mailto:lara.c@mhcc.org.au) or 0421 202 643