

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NSW State Budget 20/21

Today's State Budget has been delivered after a devastating year, when drought, bushfires and the COVID 19 pandemic have had an unprecedented impact on the community, including on people's mental health and wellbeing. A recent IPSOS poll showed 45% believed their mental health had been affected a "great deal" or a "fair amount" by the pandemic, and the impact is higher still for young people.

Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) welcomes the initiatives outlined in the 20/21 Budget to support the mental health and wellbeing of the community including:

- \$66.5 m in 20/21 for COVID 19 related mental health and wellbeing measures including:
 - additional mental health clinicians and peer workers to enhance community mental health services
 - expanding the Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response (PACER) model
 - increasing the capacity of the Mental Health Line and expanding virtual mental health services
- \$66.2m over 3 years from 21-22 to continue the additional specialist mental health clinicians and an expansion of youth health services
- \$50.4m over 3 years from 21/22 to provide technology enabled workforce support options including remote video conferencing and telehealth services to provide more access to mental health support for people in immediate crisis
- \$46.8m over 4 years for an additional 100 wellbeing and in-reach nurses in schools
- \$6m over 3 years to establish 12 Mental Health and Community Wellbeing Collaboratives
- Establishment of a residential Eating Disorders Treatment Centre at a total cost of \$13m

The Budget has also allocated just over \$30m to the State-wide Mental Health Infrastructure program which is estimated to cost \$700m over 10 years.

MHCC CEO Carmel Tebbutt said: "In a tough budget environment it is good to see new initiatives such as the wellbeing nurses along with the continuation of many of the mental health measures announced during the pandemic. We know that the economic and social impact of COVID 19 will be felt for years to come and community demand for mental health services will rise."

A new \$50M fund will support not for profits operating in the social and health services area to adapt to meet the challenges of the future by supporting investment in priority areas of transformation.

Funding has also been doubled for the Together Home Program to assist an additional 400 more people who are sleeping rough and a new Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre will be established in Dubbo.

MS Tebbutt said these initiatives along with others in the Budget will help address some of the underlying factors contributing to mental illness but more needs to be done.

"It is disappointing that the budget has not provided additional funding to establish a network of step-up step-down services. These services provide intensive community support to help people with mental health issues avoid hospital admission as well as residential places for people who have been in hospital, assisting them to be discharged sooner.

They make both economic and social sense with research evidence showing they reduce unplanned mental health related hospital admissions and represents half the cost of an inpatient bed."

Background

- The Mental Health Coordinating Council is the peak body for community mental health in NSW.
- MHCC consults with the community mental health sector and provides policy responses to government.
- MHCC acknowledges the impacts of trauma in mental health and promotes recovery-oriented service delivery and the Peer workforce.

For further information contact:

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Our Vision

That people living with mental health conditions are supported to live meaningful lives in the communities of their choice