



Governments act on mental health sector priorities

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Mental Health Australia congratulates the health and mental health ministers for acting with the mental health sector and agreeing on immediate recommended priorities at the ministers' meeting on Friday 16th August 2024.

As outlined in a joint Mental Health Australia Statement of Priorities released on Monday 12 August 2024, Community Mental Health Australia along with Mental Health Australia and 79 other mental health organisations from across the country called for Australian, state and territory governments to come together to act to address the gap in mental health supports between primary care and acute and emergency services.

Community Mental Health Australia is pleased to see that several key priorities have been agreed to by all levels of government at Friday's meeting, which has provided an important pathway for governments and the sector to continue ongoing collaboration, co-design and co-production.

The commitment of Ministers to meet twice a year to continue to progress reform priorities is a critical start, with the inclusion of sector partnership (including those with lived and living experience) in the next meeting particularly welcome. It has also been agreed that the next meeting will focus on child and youth mental health and consider reform to address unmet needs.

Delivering on a further key recommendation of the sector agreed Statement of Priorities, the national Analysis of Unmet Need for Psychosocial Support outside the NDIS has been publicly released after today's meeting. The next step following the release of the Analysis must be a clear commitment by the Australian and State and Territory governments to co-fund and co-design and co-produce services to fully address the identified unmet need. The agreement of Ministers to work with the mental health community managed sector in developing a co-designed robust plan for future psychosocial support arrangements is a critical step forward.

Governments' acknowledgment of community mental health workforce challenges is welcome, as is their commitment to work collectively in responding. It will be important for the new national workforce data and information monitoring project to include the community-managed and peer mental health workforces, who have previously been overlooked in national data collections. Full funding of the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy is needed, with urgent action to increase access to training.

Community Mental Health Australia is the national peak representing State and Territory peaks in the Community Mental Health Sector, who represent hundreds of community managed mental health providers and the inclusion of National Mental Health Consumer Alliance and Mental Health Carers Australia.

"Friday's meeting was an opportunity for all Health and Mental Health Ministers around the country to come together and commit to addressing the unmet need in our mental health system. It's heartening to see that they have listened to us – Community Mental Health Australia in partnership with National Mental Health Consumer Alliance and Mental Health Carers Australia bring a unified voice, which will deliver a genuine co-designed approach to the planning process." said Cathy O'Toole Acting CEO of Community Mental Health Australia.

"There is still a lot of work to do together, but today's meeting opens the door for a genuine partnership."



Improving access to community managed mental health supports is a joint responsibility across all governments in Australia, and today's meeting shows governments are willing to work together to achieve critical change. Community Mental Health Australia will continue to work in partnership with governments, while collaboratively engaging with our member organisations and people with lived and living experience of mental ill-health and their family, carers and supporters, to ensure a co-designed and co-produced national approach to co-funding solutions is front and centre in intergovernmental negotiations, and in the lead-up to the federal election.

Cathy O'Toole
Acting CEO Community Mental Health Australia