



CMHA PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 24-25

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About CMHA

Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA) is the coalition of states and territory peak community mental health organisations and provides a voice for several hundred community-based non-government organisations working to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people living with mental health conditions, their families, and carers and for all Australians.

CMHA Coalition

- Mental Health Coalition of South Australia
- Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT
- Mental Health Coordinating Council NSW
- Mental Health Council of Tasmania
- Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition
- Queensland Alliance for Mental Health
- Western Australian Association for Mental Health

Context:

A key recommendation of the recent NDIS Review is for greater investment in psychosocial supports (“Foundational Supports”) outside the NDIS (<https://www.ndisreview.gov.au/resources/fact-sheet/psychosocial-supports>).

In the National Agreement of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (NAMHSP) the Commonwealth & States agreed to assessing the unmet need for psychosocial support services outside the NDIS following the 2020 Productivity Commission’s assessment of the significant scale of that unmet need.

South Australia (SA) has been the first State to complete and report on their assessment of unmet need. Using the SA estimate numbers as a sample, per capital there are 286,000 people living with severe mental illness across Australia with no psychosocial support.

All other jurisdictions assessments are expected to be complete by March 2024. Action 129 of the NAMHP says “*future arrangements for psychosocial supports outside of the NDIS will be developed after the analysis work has been completed and attached to this Agreement as a Schedule*”.

CMHA Key Asks

- 1) Increase Commonwealth investment in commissioned Psychosocial Support Services Outside the NDIS that are delivered by community managed organisations (CMOs) in the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Sector to address the mental health needs of people with moderate to severe symptoms who are ineligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This investment must be able to respond to locally identified needs in specific jurisdictions.

This new funding needs to bridge the gap in funding for CMO-delivered psychosocial supports identified by the Psychosocial Project Group Unmet Needs Assessment (due in March 2024) and funding responsibility shared in a 50-50 agreement with states and territories. Evidence indicates that this initiative, will in time amongst other things:

- a. significantly decrease demand for mental health emergency services (i.e. decreasing “hospital ramping”)
 - b. assist in limiting the adverse psychological effects of disasters and emergencies (see Psychosocial Support limit the adverse psychological effects of disasters & emergencies)
- 2) Early intervention saves lives, money and years lost to ill health. Increase investment in low intensity mental health services commissioned by PHNs, state and territory governments and other commissioning bodies that focus on population-wide wellbeing initiatives and early intervention, including scaling-up and expanding social prescribing initiatives.
- 3) To ensure that a competent and available workforce can be developed and maintained, future updates of the National Mental Health Agreement must include clauses to ensure that all contracts and grants provided by commissioning bodies, including Primary Health Networks, for the provision of psychosocial, mental health and wellbeing services are:
 - a. consistently five years in length (with a five-year extension option); and
 - b. Include full indexation which is passed on the providers and accurately reflects the increased costs of business.
- 4) Identify specific strategies which can be actioned as part of the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy to better understand and utilise the CMO workforce and reduce the burden on clinical workforce, including:
 - a. Developing a national plan to grow the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Sector workforce including the peer workforce; and
 - b. Improving mechanisms to collect national data on the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Sector workforce, through the commissioning of a biennial national workforce survey through the CMHA members/state/territory peaks.

Ensure that the national wellbeing framework Measuring What Matters (Appendix 1) is independently evaluated to assess the extent to which the wellbeing indicators which have been selected for the framework include non-clinical mental health indicators that are able to provide true, unbiased measures of progress.

In addition, CMHA asks the Treasurer to commit to:

- c. A whole-of-government approach where every Minister is held accountable to the framework as part of their portfolio.
- d. All new policy proposals to be assessed in terms of how they will impact agreed wellbeing indicators.

Time Frame

That the increased investment in commissioned Psychosocial Support Services Outside the NDIS to meet the unmet need be rolled out over a 5-year period with 20% being achieved by 2026.

Appendix 1: Psychosocial Support outside the NDIS and the National Measuring What Matters Framework

Measuring What Matters is Australia's national wellbeing framework to track progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous Australia. The Framework will gradually be embedded into all levels of government decision making, to develop, coordinate and evaluate policies.

The psychosocial foundational supports provided by well-formed Psychosocial Support Program outside the NDIS would address the following indicators in the National Measuring What Matters Framework.

Healthy

Healthy throughout life

- **Life expectancy, Mental health, Prevalence of chronic conditions**
 - A well-formed psychosocial support program can improve mental health outcomes, which are closely linked to life expectancy and the management of chronic conditions. These programs provide support and coping strategies, leading to improved mental well-being and potentially reducing the impact of chronic health conditions.

Equitable access to quality health and care services

- **Access to health services, Access to care and support services**
 - Psychosocial support programs are crucial for providing equitable access to health and care services, particularly for mental health, ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds have access to necessary mental health support and services.

Secure

Living peacefully and feeling safe

- **Feeling of safety, Experience of violence, Childhood experience of abuse, Online safety, National safety, Access to justice**
 - Psychosocial programs offer support to individuals who have experienced violence or abuse, enhancing safety and security in the community. They also support online safety and access to justice.

Having financial security and access to housing

- **Making ends meet, Homelessness, Housing serviceability**
 - Psychosocial support can aid financial security and housing stability, especially where mental health issues are affecting individual's work ability or housing stability.

Sustainable

Resilient and sustainable nation

- **Fiscal Sustainability**
 - Psychosocial Support Services will reduce demand on the hospital system and better ensure the sustained provision of these essential government services.
- **Economic Resilience**
 - Psychosocial support services produce a range of secondary effects on improving wellbeing, resilience, social connection and economic participation of carers, families and communities.

Cohesive

Having time for family and community

- **Time for recreation and social interaction, Social connections, Creative and cultural engagement**
 - Effective psychosocial support improves mental health, leading to more active engagement in community and family activities, better time management, and maintained social connections.

Valuing diversity, belonging, and culture

- **Experience of discrimination, Acceptance of diversity, First Nations languages spoken, Sense of belonging**
 - An inclusive, culturally sensitive psychosocial support program fosters an environment of diversity and belonging, supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds and promoting acceptance and community belonging.

Trust in institutions

- **Trust in others, Trust in key institutions, Trust in Australian public services, Trust in national government, Representation in parliament**
 - Accessible psychosocial support programs can build trust in public services and institutions by demonstrating a public commitment to community well-being and by providing reliable and empathetic support, empowering individuals through participation, fostering safe community connections, educating them about their rights and social systems, collaborating with other institutions, and respecting individual and cultural differences. This approach helps in alleviating feelings of alienation and fosters a more inclusive and trusting relationship between individuals and the community at large.

Prosperous

Dynamic economy that shares prosperity

- **National income per capita, Productivity, Household income and wealth, Income and wealth inequality, Innovation**
 - Indirectly, a national psychosocial support program can contribute to a more productive and prosperous economy by improving workforce mental health, enhancing productivity and overall economic performance.

Access to education, skills development, and learning throughout life

- **Childhood development, Literacy and numeracy skills at school, Education attainment, Skills development, Digital preparedness**
 - Psychosocial support aids in childhood development and enhances learning outcomes by addressing mental health barriers in families to supporting childhood education and skill development.

Broad opportunities for employment and well-paid secure jobs

- **Wages, Job opportunities, Broadening access to work, Job satisfaction, Secure jobs**
 - Psychosocial support indirectly influences employment opportunities by improving mental health, leading to better job performance, satisfaction, and the ability to secure stable employment. Psychosocial Support also increase labour market participation rate for participants as well as employee reliability and sustainability.