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CMHA welcomes the investments in mental health from both parties; however, the question is are these investments targeting much need system transformation.

CMHA President, Cathy O’Toole said “Whilst it is important to highlight this investment it is also critical to ensure that investment is targeted to ensure genuine mental health system transformational where clinical and community supports work together to ensure people with lived experience are living contributing, meaningful and flourishing lives. Simply putting more investment into clinical supports misses the opportunity of much needed transformational change”.

Kerry Hawkins, CMHA CEO said, “It’s a question of priorities. Community Mental Health Australia asking for a \$3.35 million investment over 3 years to do the long overdue work necessary to build the community sector workforce infrastructure that will deliver a *fit for purpose* support system that will include a human rights approach to addressing the social determinants of mental health.

These funds will deliver:

- A cross-sector psychosocial workforce survey.
- A psychosocial workforce strategy.
- An immediate psychosocial workforce capability uplift through the state and territory peak bodies.

The question is “Will the next federal government prioritise genuine system transformation or deliver more of the same?”

The community managed mental health sector welcomes the establishment of the newly formed National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (NMHCA) and Mental Health Carers Australia (MHCA). Community based support is critical and must be co-produced with lived experience to ensure that people’s human rights are met.

It’s encouraging to see Minister Butler acknowledge the pressure on the mental health workforce. Investment in the psychosocial workforce and support systems will help ease this burden. The inclusion of peer workforce placements in the \$90 million workforce training package is long overdue.

For more details on CMHA’s election priorities see here.

Learn more about both party’s priority pledges for mental health here:

About Community Mental Health Australia: CMHA provides a unified voice for over 700 community-based, non-government organisations that work with tens of thousands of people with lived or living experience of poor mental health, families, and carers. The sector emphasises accessibility, prevention, early intervention, and holistic approaches to mental health and well-being. These organisations also address the social determinants of health, offering a wide range of practical supports to enhance a resilient transformative recovery and resilience.

Community Managed Organisations (CMOs) are a cornerstone of this sector, with many founded by people with lived experience. CMOs play a critical role in expanding the lived experience workforce and fostering transformational services. CMHA provides leadership and advocacy to highlight the importance of community mental health and psychosocial support, ensuring its benefits are recognised and valued nationwide.

Kerry Hawkins
CEO CMHA

Cathy O’Toole
President CMHA