

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NSW Needs to Lift Spending on Community Mental Health

NSW again lags other states in spending on mental health services delivered by community managed organisations, revealed in Productivity Commission figures released today.

The Productivity Commission Report on Government Services health chapter shows NSW spends less than 7 percent of its mental health budget on non-government organisations, lower than most other states.

More than 55 percent of the NSW mental health budget is spent on acute mental health services compared to a national average of 45 percent. This is despite hospital/inpatient care being more expensive and community based care consistently providing better health outcomes for people living with mental health conditions when provided in a timely manner.

Currently too many people rely on emergency departments and admissions to acute or inpatient facilities because of a lack of services in the community that could intervene early.

The number of mental health related emergency department presentations per 10,000 population has increased by 72% from 2010-11 to 2016-17.

CEO of MHCC Carmel Tebbutt said “The Productivity Commission report again demonstrates the importance of NSW lifting its investment in community mental health services. People living with mental health conditions should be able to get the support they need when they need it, rather than waiting for a crisis to occur.”

A recent report by the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) recommends investment in targeted services to improve the lives of people with mental health conditions, reduce pressure on emergency departments and save money.

The [Mental Health Matters report](#) calls for greater resources for mental health services and to shift the emphasis from hospital treatment towards prevention and community support. It outlines the following three priorities:

- 1) Expand supported living services and provide funding to also address the physical health needs of people with mental health conditions (HASI/CLS type supports)
- 2) Provide 600 step up/step down places to bridge the gap between acute care and community living
- 3) Establish community mental health hubs with a range of co-located and peer support services

“We need to see greater funding for the priorities outlined in the Mental Health Matters report. There is strong evidence that expanding services in these areas would improve health and social outcomes for people living with mental health conditions and reduce hospital admissions. This doesn’t just make good health sense, it makes good economic sense.” said Carmel Tebbutt

KPMG prepared the research for the Mental Health Matters report which shows the return on investment in these initiatives will pay for itself in the short term and result in significant savings in the long term.

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Our Vision

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