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MEDIA RELEASE FEDERAL BUDGET 2019-20

WE NEED BILLIONS NOT MILLIONS INVESTED IN MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Victoria (MHV) welcomes the \$737 million commitment of new funding over seven years announced in last night's Federal Budget, but said much more needs to be invested to meet urgent needs in the community.

Mental Health Victoria CEO Angus Clelland said people with mental health issues, their carers and families, and the broader mental health sector will be looking to all major parties in the coming federal election campaign for greater investment in mental health.

It is also vital to ensure the funding for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is not cut, he said.

"For too long, mental health has been the poor cousin of the health sector," Mr Clelland said.

"While we welcome the new mental health funding contained in the Budget, we all know that a lot more needs to be done, and can be done given the projected surplus."

The major Federal Budget initiatives in mental health include:

- \$230m across 11 initiatives to improve mental health in the community, including \$115m to trial 8 mental health centres for adults;
- \$110m to extend Early Psychosis Youth Services; and
- \$263m to expand the headspace network.

Mental Health Victoria commends the Federal Government for including a trial of eight community based mental health service centres or 'hubs' for adults in the Budget.

"It's vital that we do everything we can to provide accessible, multi-disciplinary community based treatment and support services to keep people safe and well at home and in the community, so that emergency hospital treatment is not their only option," Mr Clelland said.

On the downside, Mental Health Victoria shares the grave concern of the disability sector about the \$1.6 billion reduction in NDIS funding in 2019-20.

"Underspending in the NDIS in this financial year has been largely due to complexities in navigating the new system for new entrants," Mr Clelland said.

"Better engagement with the sector should see these problems ironed out over the next couple of years. Now is not the time to reduce the Government's contribution."

Mental ill-health places great pressures on those who live with it, and with their families and carers, and costs the Australian economy around 4% of GDP per annum.

"Given the magnitude of the mental health challenges we face as a country, more needs to be invested," Mr Clelland said.

"We need the Commonwealth to invest billions not millions to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Australians."

All quotes attributable to Angus Clelland – CEO, Mental Health Victoria

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