**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Mental Health Victoria welcomes State Opposition commitment to mental health, urges Royal Commission commitment**

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Mental Health Victoria, the peak body for the state’s mental health sector, congratulates Matthew Guy MP on his appointment as Liberal Party Leader and welcomes his early commitment to improving the mental health and wellbeing of young Victorians.

Mental Health Victoria CEO Angus Clelland said the organisation is supportive of Mr Guy’s proposal for an expansion of the Victorian Government’s Mental Health Practitioner in Schools program, although it recognises this would be challenging in the short term given workforce shortages.

“The major hurdle for the expansion of any state program is the shortage of mental health workers. There are not enough mental health nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers and other professionals to go around,” Mr Clelland said.

“This is a national problem that cannot be solved by Victoria alone. National action is required so that major reforms, such as those recommended by the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System, can be successfully implemented,” he said.

“We have been in deep discussion with the Department of Health on this emerging crisis and believe that one of the most practical ways to provide support to children and families in the short term is to mobilise Victoria’s large network of community health and mental health organisations, in partnership with local government”.

Mr Clelland said the mental health sector also urged an Opposition commitment to the full implementation of all the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

“As we head into an election year, this will provide an assurance that whatever the outcome of the November 2022 election, the 10-year transformation of Victoria’s mental health system will be delivered as intended”, he said.

*For further information or to arrange an interview with Angus Clelland, please call Tim Kroenert on 0403 808 464.*