



**WAAMH**

Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Budget heavy lifting still to be done on mental health**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) welcomes the substantial commitment to suicide prevention in yesterday's state budget but cautions this is only the beginning of the heavy lifting required to rebalance the mental health system.

"The WA Ten Year Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services Plan signaled a long overdue shift in the priority of mental health funding to that of early intervention and supporting people experiencing mental health issues before they need acute care," WAAMH president Alison Xamon said.

"While the commitment to the new Suicide Prevention Strategy is a welcome contribution to this change, the further investment in community support services - identified as essential in the plan - are not in the four year forward estimates."

The plan was also built on the expectation that the Federal government would maintain its investment in community mental health services.

There was no certainty provided to these services in the Federal budget, with the Commonwealth government merely renewing its commitment to establish an Expert Reference Group to consider the recommendations of the National Review of Mental Health Services and Programmes and develop a fifth National Mental Health Plan.

"With both State and Commonwealth governments in possession of clear blueprints for mental health reform, it is critical they work together, alongside people living with mental illness and their carers, service providers, and NGOs, to build the mental health system Australia expects," Ms Xamon said.

### **About WAAMH**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) has been engaged in the mental health sector for more than 50 years. WAAMH is the peak body representing the community-managed mental health sector in WA, with more than 100 organisational and individual members. Our vision is to lead the way in supporting and promoting the human rights of people with mental illness, their families and carers, through the provision of inclusive, well-governed community-based services, focused on recovery. WAAMH advocates for effective public policy on mental health issues, delivers workforce training and sector development, and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing. Further info at <http://www.waamh.org.au>

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