

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**14 April 2015**

### **State and Federal Governments now have clear direction for mental health reform**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) welcomes calls for a 10 year commitment by the federal government to reforming mental health, following the leak of a summary of the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services.

The reported shift to direct more funding to community mental health services and commit to a longer term plan for mental health in Australia, complements the WA government's recent commitment to its 10 year mental health services plan.

WAAMH CEO Rod Astbury said WA's 10 year mental health plan and the leaked recommendations in the national review charted a similar course.

"Both shift the priority of mental health funding to that of early intervention and supporting people experiencing mental health issues before they need acute care," Mr Astbury said.

"They are built around person-centred, individualised and evidence based approaches, in place of crisis driven responses; recognise that regional and remote communities have been most neglected; and indigenous mental health is a priority."

The proposed additional investment in community mental health services will result in long term financial savings as well as avoiding unnecessary distress for individuals and families.

WAAMH echoes calls from national peak body for community mental health, Mental Health Australia that now is the time for the Federal Government to work with State and Territory Governments, people living with mental illness and their carers, service providers, and NGOs to build the mental health system Australia expects.

"With both state and federal governments now in possession of a clear direction for mental health reform, they need to commit to working together to ensure change happens," Mr Astbury said.

"It's also vitally important to involve consumers of mental health services, their families and carers, and representatives of the services in taking these reforms forward, as reform will only be successful if all relevant people are included in the process."

#### **About WAAMH**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) is the peak body representing the community-managed mental health sector in WA, with around 150 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. More at [waamh.org.au](http://waamh.org.au)

#### **Media Contacts**

**Rod Astbury**  
Chief Executive Officer  
WA Association for Mental Health  
08 9420 7277  
[RAstbury@waamh.org.au](mailto:RAstbury@waamh.org.au)

**Brooke Johns**  
Public Relations  
WA Association for Mental Health  
08 9420 7277  
[BJohns@waamh.org.au](mailto:BJohns@waamh.org.au)