



Welcome shift in positive mental health investment

Media statement
WA Association for Mental Health
January 22, 2021

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) today welcomed the WA Liberal Party's 2021 State Election commitments for mental health, which demonstrates a significant and positive shift towards a person-centred approach of prevention and community support.

The WA Liberals have committed almost \$240 million in new, additional investment for mental health over four years, with the vast majority being allocated to mental health prevention and community supports, which strongly aligns with the asks of the Prevent Support Heal campaign.

WAAMH launched the Prevent Support Heal campaign in 2020, aimed at increasing funding to community mental health support and prevention services, in line with the targets set out in the Western Australian Government's own 10-year mental health plan, Better Choices, Better Lives.

WAAMH CEO Taryn Harvey said while the Liberal's proposed funding commitments will move towards the targets set out in The Plan, there is still substantial work to be done.

"More funding is required to reach the targets for prevention and community supports, with approximately \$89.2 million of State funding annually required for prevention by 2025, and \$245.6 million annually for community supports," she said.

"There also needs to be a guarantee that priority groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CaLD, and LGBTQI communities are prioritised in the development, design and implementation of initiatives and that co-designed, community-led and collaborative approaches are ensured."

With less than two months remaining until the State Election on the 13th of March 2021, WAAMH now calls on all other political parties to follow suit and prioritise mental health prevention and community supports in their own election commitments.

"It is encouraging to see the Liberal party has listened to the voices of people with mental health challenges, their families and friends and the people who care for them," said Ms Harvey.

"People of Western Australia want effective alternatives to emergency departments and hospital beds for their mental health care, we know that because they have told us their stories through Prevent Support Heal campaign."

Community mental health services work to support people to secure jobs, form relationships, build fulfilling lives, develop skills and interests, prevent hospital admissions, and promote healing - while people are living well in their own homes.

Key announcements include:

- \$45 million for a fully funded implementation plan for the [Western Australian Mental Health Promotion, Mental Illness, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Plan 2018-2025](#).
- \$35 million expanded funding for the development and implementation of State-wide and regional suicide prevention plans.

- \$61 million for non-accommodation mental health community supports, including employment specialists in adult mental health services, rural and remote neighborhood centers, and individual mental health advocacy services.
- \$12 million for peer-based community support initiatives.
- \$47 million for supported accommodation options in the community.
- \$35 million to fund the implementation of the [Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020-2025](#) across all mental health service streams.
- \$4 million for mental health workforce development.

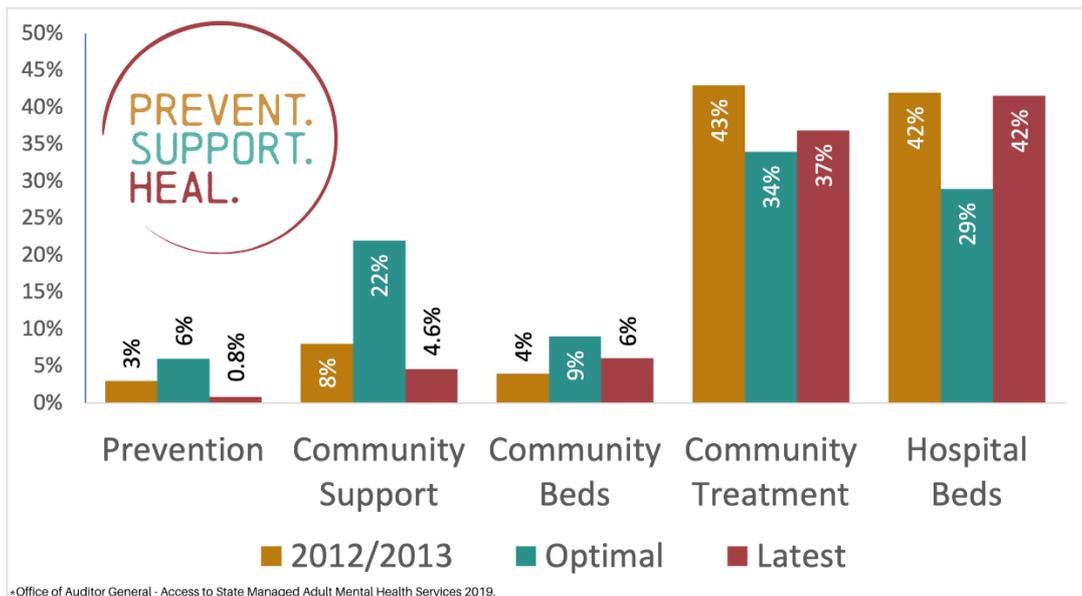
Ms Harvey said today’s announcement represents a significant and positive shift in mental health investment in WA towards a more balanced allocation of funding across the five service types of community support, prevention, community beds, community treatment and hospital beds.

“At present, expenditure on mental health services in WA is heavily reliant on costly acute services. Increasing prevention initiatives and access to community services will keep people well, out of hospital and connected to their family, friends and community,” she said.

“This help to reduce the load on our Emergency Departments and hospital services, which we know are under significant pressure.”

The Prevent Support Heal campaign calls on all political parties to commit to:

- Increase investment in mental health prevention from 1% to 5% of the mental health budget; and
- Increase funding for community mental health services five-fold from 5% to 22% of the mental health budget.
- Our research shows that:
 - 77% of people think the State Government should improve mental health services in WA and 65% said mental health services didn’t receive the funding it needs.
 - More than half of voters at 53.6% said they are more likely to vote for a party if they had a plan to increase funding into community mental health supports and services.
 - A massive 81.3% of people across WA want more information about mental health services.
 - Of the \$1billion currently spent on mental health in WA, just \$17m was allocated in the 2020/21 State Budget to deal with prevention and just \$22m for community support.



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