



**WAAMH**

Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health

## MEDIA RELEASE

11 April 2019

### Funding injection into sustainable health promising but missing the right balance

WESTERN Australia's peak body for mental health, the Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) welcomes today's announcement from the State Government to direct \$23.1 million towards mental health recommendations from the Sustainable Health Review (SHR), and further funding for decommissioning Graylands Hospital and establishing Recovery Colleges, however we continue to see the majority of investment still being directed at hospital beds, reinforcing old structures.

Despite the bulk of funding favouring inpatient services, WAAMH remains confident with the SHR's focus on housing and accommodation in the mental health section, which was identified through much of our consultations as one of the most pressing concerns among people with lived experience of mental health issues.

WAAMH welcomes the Government's plans for a Home First model of care, the concept of Safe Cafes and the "one-stop-shop" for children and families, and looks forward to learning more about how the planning and modeling for these initiatives may look.

"People we have engaged with have been asking for alternatives to acute services for a long time, so it's encouraging to see the start of a shift in focus," WAAMH chief executive officer Taryn Harvey said.

"We also strongly welcome the funding to plan for the decommissioning of Graylands, and continue to stress the importance of this divestment being directed into building accommodation supports based in the community.

"Plans to develop Recovery Colleges in WA which empower people with lived experience to take charge of their own recovery pathways is also pleasing to see, although this is taking a long time to realise and we'd like to see more progress on the ground. Recovery Colleges are important as they offer a unique approach to recovery through an educational approach and self-management."

Both the Government's own policy and the Mental Health 10 Year Plan (and two-year Draft Plan Update) have identified prevention and community supports as the two most effective areas to invest in and grow significantly in order to diminish the pressure on Emergency Departments and acute services.

Ms Harvey said with this in mind, it would seemingly be the most obvious place to start allocating the majority of resources.

"Disappointingly, we still haven't seen the five-fold increase in community support funding," Ms Harvey said. "Once again, Government has prioritised the largest allocation of funding to inpatient services."



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“When are we going to see the appropriate level of funding being directed to prevention and community supports actually being met? The priorities are the wrong way around - we’re still not hitting the targets.

“Despite the positive narrative consistently surrounding the need for more prevention and community support services, its sense of urgency is yet to be realised.

“If we keep reinforcing this unbalanced approach, people’s mental health will continue to escalate so they require more crisis services.”

The SHR also did not specifically mention how rural and remote mental health initiatives would be impacted nor address if the 5% increase in prevention expenditure targets would be met by 2025.

“People have been waiting a long time for the shift to prevention, and it’s clear to see why – it keeps people well, makes the best of their lives, and dramatically decreases the over-reliance on acute and emergency services,” Ms Harvey concluded.

“Acute services obviously have a place but our current system is not sustainable and won’t become sustainable until this shifts.”

To date, we have seen a steady stream of investment in bed-based services and while there is no question they have their place in the system, the distribution of funding has been largely out of balance.

WAAMH will continue to advocate for the appropriate levels of investment in prevention and community-based services to be matched.

## Media contacts

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