



WAAMH

**Western Australian Association
for Mental Health**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Federal Government budget extends employment support for young people with mental health issues, but adults remain unsupported

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) welcomes the Federal Government's commitment of \$45.7 million over three years to extend the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) trial, supporting people under the age of 25 with mental health issues to participate in the workforce.

IPS is a vocational service integrated with mental health treatment, supporting participants to rapidly search for employment opportunities that meet their preferences and strengths. The vocational specialist works as part of the treatment team providing time-unlimited follow along supports throughout the participants employment journey.

WAAMH has been a long-term advocate for IPS, calling for all Australians accessing mental health services to have access to employment and education opportunities. The IPS WORKS unit at WAAMH has provided implementation support, technical assistance, and fidelity reviews to the 24 sites participating in the youth trial.

While the extension of the IPS program to support young Australians is encouraging, a significant cohort of people living with mental health issues over the age of 26 years remain unsupported in seeking meaningful employment.

The job losses Australians have suffered as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the surge in mental health issues that emerged from the crisis calls for significant investment into vocational support. The evidence based IPS employment model is an ideal solution to supporting people into employment and education opportunities to assist their personal and our national recovery.

WAAMH's State Election campaign, Prevent Support Heal, is calling on the State Government to increase investment into community supports so Western Australian adults living with mental health issues can access employment and education that will assist their recovery and promote social inclusion, access to housing and financial freedom.

WAAMH President, Kerry Hawkins, said the extension in federal funding of the IPS program is a massive step in the right direction for supporting young people with mental health challenges to secure meaningful employment and promote a sense of self-worth.

"The fact is, however, there is a vast number of people living with mental health issues who are over the age of 26, and who want to find employment, but lack the specialised support the IPS model provides.

"Prevent Support Heal is a State Election campaign that is calling on the Western Australian Government to increase investment in community mental health supports and prevention initiatives, and the IPS program is an excellent example of this type of support."

The National Productivity Commission draft report on mental health estimated that approximately 50,000 job seekers with mental illnesses could benefit from participation in IPS.

“There is now an opportunity for the State Government to support the recovery of adults living with mental health issues through employment, along with young people, by embracing our Prevent Support Health Election Manifesto asks and investing new money into community supports, just like IPS,” Ms. Hawkins said.

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