



WAAMH

Western Australian Association
for Mental Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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State Budget crunch time for mental health

Next week's State Budget will be crunch time for mental health services in Western Australia, says the peak body for mental health, the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH).

It's crucial the budget, to be handed down this month, addresses recently highlighted problems in the mental health system, that continue to receive considerable media attention and raise public concern, and have been the source of concern for years.

The recently publicised Coroners inquests into the suitability of Graylands draws the same conclusions as the wide ranging Stokes Review of 2012; that WA's mental health system is over-stretched and crisis-driven and needs substantial investment and reform.

Following the Stokes Review, the current state government committed to a ten-year mental health services plan. The Mental Health Commission consulted widely with consumers of mental health services, their families and the services in preparing the plan in late 2013.

"What is needed now is for the government to prioritise investment in this plan and it should announce how it will do so in next week's budget," WAAMH president Alison Xamon said.

"There must be bi-partisan support at both Commonwealth and State level to address the neglect of mental health both sides of politics have had responsibility for over the years."

This investment should go beyond the current budget and election cycle because the commitment needed is decades long.

Minister for Mental Health Helen Morton recently indicated the future of Graylands is under serious consideration, and there will be a need to restructure and reinvest, in order to achieve much needed reform. For this to happen, any resources currently invested in mental health must remain fully invested in mental health.

There also remains considerable misunderstanding of mental health and there must be sustained public education about the desirability and safety of services located in the community.

"After enthusiastically contributing to consultation on the ten year mental health services plan, the mental health sector will be deeply disillusioned if there isn't a strong and sustained commitment to it by both the government and the opposition," Ms Xamon said.

About WAAMH

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health is the peak body representing the community-managed mental health sector in WA. Through our members, our vision is to lead the way in supporting and promoting the human rights of people with mental illness and their families and carers, with inclusive, well-governed community-based services focused on recovery. More at <http://www.waamh.org.au>

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