

# Prevent, Support, Heal

Balance the mental health system

PREVENT.  
SUPPORT.  
HEAL.



MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2021

## Mental health prevention and community support lacking from Labor package

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health rejects today's WA Labor election commitment on mental health, on the grounds of it being treatment-focused and lacking in community support and preventative mental health programs that keep people well and out of hospital, and instead continue to drive people to the acute end of care.

WAAMH CEO Taryn Harvey said the plan included next to nothing new for adults which addresses the government's commitment to a safe place and reduced people cycling in and out hospitals by increasing resources through community mental health support.

Polling by Painted Dog released today shows that 82% of respondents want the government to increase investment in supports which prevent a person from developing a mental health issue and 83% want an effective alternative to hospitals for their mental health care.

"This package largely ignores the calls from people with lived experience for an alternative approach that doesn't assume treatment and hospital are the first port of call," Ms Harvey said.

"People with lived experience feel unheard and dismissed in hospitals and Emergency Department environments, which we know can cause further trauma and distress for people, particularly young people."

Today's announcement takes the mental health system away from progressing the targets set out in the Government's own ten-year mental health plan, Better Choices Better Lives, which outlines 5% for prevention and 22% for community support in the optimal service mix. Instead, it further entrenches an unsustainable, expensive and crisis-oriented system that takes away people's dignity and respect.

Of today's \$361 million announcement, just 12.6% is directed at community support and 1% on prevention.

"Most of the initiatives are for hospitals or treatment where a person needs to reach crisis before they can access care," Ms Harvey said. "The one thing for mental health prevention is \$4m of workplace mental health grants out of a \$361m package over four years.

"We welcome the \$17.6m for Aboriginal mental health care – but again this will not meet the demand needed across the State.

"This plan is very much business as usual that assumes people have to begin their recovery journey at the hospital or in treatment rather than in the community.

"The Minister for Mental Health talked about an investment in mental health but has not followed through on any of the preventative programs that help to reduce someone's distress in the community and near their homes rather than in clinical-based settings."

Prevent, Support, Heal  
Authorised by Taryn Harvey, CEO  
Western Australian Association for Mental Health  
1 Nash Street, Perth, WA 6000  
08 6246 3000  
[preventsupportheal.org.au](http://preventsupportheal.org.au)  
[preventsupportheal@waamh.org.au](mailto:preventsupportheal@waamh.org.au)



An initiative of your community  
mental health peak body



**WAAMH**

Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health

# Prevent, Support, Heal

Balance the mental health system

PREVENT.  
SUPPORT.  
HEAL.



Ms Harvey said there were only 30 packages of support for young people, yet this will hardly touch the sides when records show nearly 6000 young people attended EDs for their mental health care each year.

“A young person still has to be assessed and in crisis to get admitted into a short stay step-up step down which means the focus is on acute and sub-acute rather than prevention and community support,” she said.

## Media enquiries

Sarah Quinton

Campaign Manager

0439 439 233

Western Australian Association for Mental Health

[SQuinton@waamh.org.au](mailto:SQuinton@waamh.org.au)

The Prevent Support Heal campaign website: [preventsupportheal.org.au](http://preventsupportheal.org.au)

Prevent, Support, Heal

Authorised by Taryn Harvey, CEO

Western Australian Association for Mental Health

1 Nash Street, Perth, WA 6000

08 6246 3000

[preventsupportheal.org.au](http://preventsupportheal.org.au)

[preventsupportheal@waamh.org.au](mailto:preventsupportheal@waamh.org.au)



An initiative of your community  
mental health peak body



**WAAMH**

Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health