



WAAMH

Western Australian Association
for Mental Health

MEDIA RELEASE

14 December 2020

Review highlights urgent need for investment into child and adolescent mental health

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) calls on the Government to immediately increase funding into child and adolescent mental health services as recommended by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist WA, outlined in the Chief Psychiatrist's Review into the Treatment of Ms Kate Savage by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services' [report](#) released today.

WAAMH acting chief executive officer Chelsea McKinney said it was promising to see the Government taking [immediate action](#) on key recommendations from the report, including the implementation of a model for peer workers to support families accessing the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. However, funding needs to be allocated urgently in order to address the severe gaps in service delivery for young people.

The report identifies chronic underinvestment as a key barrier to providing services and creating an effective mental health system for children and young people. It also notes that the [Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020-2025](#) (YPPA) framework is currently unfunded.

The review found that "there has been a significant escalation of serious mental health issues for children, particularly in the number of young people who are self-harming".

"It is abundantly clear that additional investment to better support the mental health of children and young people is urgent," Ms McKinney said.

"The Government's Ten-Year Mental Health Services Plan showed that we need 4.2 times as much community treatment for babies, children and adolescents as we had when the Plan was released in 2015. With even greater gaps in northern and remote parts of the State including the Pilbara, Midwest, Goldfields and Kimberley, it is unclear from the report whether the recommendations will address the need for additional community support and treatment services for children in regional and remote parts of the state.

"The expected release of the Young People Priority Framework on 16 December is an opportune time for the Minister for Mental Health to announce additional funding for children and young people, in line with the priorities and actions that will be announced. This framework will be a step in the right direction, and what is needed next is sufficient investment in children's mental health to ensure full implementation of the framework."

WAAMH also supports calls in the review to fund a full range of services for children and young people, including early intervention and prevention. Mental health prevention is chronically underfunded in WA, and this must be rectified, in line with the [WA Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025 Plan Update 2018](#) to move from 1% of the mental health budget to 6% by 2025.

WAAMH advocates for investment in additional innovative non-clinical recovery community support options, to provide children and young people, families and carers with choice and options for care and support in the community.

WAAMH emphasises the critical need for the newly established Child and Adolescent Mental Health Ministerial Taskforce to engage with families, carers and young people and other key stakeholders, including the non-government mental health sector, in genuine co-design processes as it works on designing and rebuilding of the CAMHS system, with a focus on whole-of-system, long-term and sustainable reform.

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