



WAAMH

**Western Australian Association
for Mental Health**

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MEDIA RELEASE

The McGowan Government's Young People's Priorities for Action leaves chronic gaps unfunded

The Labor McGowan Government has missed an opportunity to immediately address the chronic gaps that would help young people in mental health distress after they released the long-awaited Young People's Priorities for Action without any funding or election commitment today.

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) Acting Chief Executive Officer Chelsea McKinney said given the heightened awareness and increased demand for youth mental health services in recent months, it was disappointing that no new funding was announced that would deliver on any actions needed to address the crisis.

"For the sake of our young people, their families, carers and the public and community mental health services that support them, we strongly urge the McGowan government to announce immediate additional funding to implement to the Young People's Priorities for Action 2020-2025," she said.

"The Chief Psychiatrist report released this week found families are at breaking point, where they are literally left to hold their babies who are at risk of suicide and self-harm with very little or no support from the public health system.

"The report also found families want better options for their children during a crisis and greater support when their child leaves the emergency department."

Ms McKinney said 2020 has been an extraordinary year, particularly for young people whose employment and studies have been severely impacted.

"We know that for every \$1 spent on prevention, we would save \$14 in the long term. We must invest upfront now across a range of prevention, community support, treatment and alternatives to emergency departments so we can save lives and distress for our young people and their families," Ms McKinney said.

"It would be bitterly disappointing for children, young people and their families if this action plan were not immediately funded. We can't afford not to invest in our children and young peoples' mental health care, the human cost is too high."

WAAMH looks forward to seeing a similar funded framework developed for children aged 0-11years old.

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