

Big spending budget has welcome initiatives

Wellways Australia has welcomed \$338 million of spending initiatives in mental health outlined in the Federal Budget last night.

The expansion of suicide support services including crisis phone support and programs sustaining people before and after a suicide attempt acknowledges a desperate need in our community and will save lives.

There is also a \$37 million investment in the beyondblue - Way Back Support Service, which provides outreach, follow-up care and practical support to vulnerable people in the crucial three months after a suicide attempt.

Money has been allocated to improve the mental health care of older Australians living in residential care and for those living in remote and regional Australia through The Royal Flying Doctor Service. There is also investment in mental health research. Along with an allocation \$12 million over four years to strengthen the National Mental Health Commission.

In all, an investment of \$338 million to improve the mental health of Australians is good news.

On the issue of homelessness, a new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement will commence in July. This provides money for both services and for building funds. We hope to see this money make a real impact in reducing the rising tide of homelessness, particularly among those with mental health issues.

However, there is very little investment for programs for people with recurring mental health issues living in our community. They need support to live in the community and remain well.

“I would like to see more spent on programs and supports to keep people well and out of a crisis situation,” said Wellways CEO Elizabeth Crowther

A “continuity of support fund” of \$9 million has been set aside to remedy this situation. “The funds allocated to assist people ruled ineligible for the NDIS must reach the most vulnerable in our community.

“How will this allocation, which is being spent across five years, work and will it get to the heart of the problem of people with mental health issues routinely being refused access to the NDIS? The devil will be in the detail.” Ms Crowther said.

“Wellways will work with the government to ensure the NDIS is as good as it possibly can be and that people are better off, not worse off, under the scheme,” said Ms Crowther.

“We will continue to call for more to be done to support mental health programs operating in the community,” she said.

We look forward to that time when everyone can benefit from the national bounty.

-ENDS-

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For more information

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About [Wellways](#) Australia

Wellways Australia is a leading not-for-profit organisation dedicated to ensuring all Australians lead active and fulfilling lives in their community. We work with individuals, families and the community to help them imagine and achieve better lives.

We advocate for change to make sure people can access the best possible care and information when they need it. We provide a wide range of services and assistance for people with mental health issues, disabilities, youth and older Australians and those requiring community care.

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