

National Federation Reform Council - Vision for Australia's future mental health and suicide prevention system

Many Australians experience mental ill-health at some stage over their life time, either directly or indirectly. One in five Australians will experience mental illness every year.

Every Australian's experience matters and is unique.

Too many Australians attempt or die by suicide each year.

So many Australians experience shame, stigma and discrimination around their mental ill health or suicide attempts or suicide of a loved one.

Supporting Australians to be mentally healthy and reducing suicide benefits individuals, families and communities, and society and the economy.

A strong mental health and suicide prevention system is also critical for Australia's social and economic recovery following prolonged drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as building Australia's resilience to future shocks.

Australia's future system will eliminate stigma and discrimination, invest in mental health and wellbeing, support those that need support, and work towards zero suicides.

Australia's mental health and suicide prevention system will be comprehensive, coordinated, consumer driven and compassionate. It will recognise the need for a whole of government approach to encompass social determinants and their impact on mental health and wellbeing and risk of suicide, and will work cohesively with the broader health system.

The system will be for all Australians and involve all Australians. It will be an inclusive system designed with people with lived experience and encompassing the unique contribution of families and loved ones, carers, communities, colleagues and workplaces, the private and non-profit sectors, our public and private health systems and all governments and their services.

Only when the system is conceived of and connected in this way, can it deliver the right support, at the right time, in the right place, for all Australians.

Our approach will recognise mental health is as important as physical health. It recognises the links between mental and physical health, and the links between broader social, cultural and economic factors and mental health. It recognises the importance of strong and safe communities, essential services, and opportunities for all Australians to participate in the economy and society.

All Australian governments commit to delivering a system where:

- mental health and its importance for a contributing life is well understood
- consumers, carers and communities are at the centre of identifying their needs, and designing and delivering responses
- stigma and discrimination are eliminated and Australians experiencing mental ill health or risk of suicide are respected and feel safe to reach out and receive support
- investment in prevention and early intervention is prioritised, both early in life and early in the development of an illness, supporting Australians to prioritise and manage their own mental health and that of their loved ones

- those most vulnerable and who experience severe mental illness will access appropriate, safe and therapeutic services when they are needed in community and bed based settings
- appropriate, affordable and accessible support is universally available for all Australians, irrespective of where they live, their life stage, or personal, cultural and social circumstances
- seamless and coordinated quality care is provided across services, within a nationally agreed set outcomes, from prevention through to recovery-focused treatment, regardless of who is providing the funding or service, or the service gateway by which a person enters the system, such as alcohol and drugs support and recovery services
- support is scalable and flexibly responds to changing circumstances and need, including in response to natural and other disasters or shocks
- a skilled workforce is developed that matches support and services with need
- technology and innovation is harnessed to improve services and outcomes
- continuous improvement is supported by research, testing what works, rigorous monitoring, measurement, and evaluation of outcomes, underpinned by robust data
- all governments and sectors are accountable for playing their part in promoting mental health and wellbeing and reducing suicide.