



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH
CONSUMER ALLIANCE

FEDERAL ELECTION UPDATE

The NMHCA is disappointed that neither major party has contacted us -- the national peak body for mental health consumers -- to find out what the needs of people living with mental health challenges are or what would work for us.

Instead, both parties have been speaking to senior psychiatrists and clinical services about their views.

As such, our core asks such as the social determinants of health, human rights, and lived experience led services are not yet a priority for either party.

Labor Election Commitments

The NMHCA is concerned that except for a commitment of funding for an unknown number of training places for peer workers, all the election commitments to date are clinically focussed.

Beyond the budget announced in March, today's announcement holds no additional funding for services and supports to meet the unmet need for people with lived experience of psychosocial disability.

Totalling \$1 billion, the latest election commitment from the Labor party focuses on youth, Medicare Mental Health Centres and training funding for:

- 58 new, upgraded or expanded headspace services.
- 20 Youth Specialist Care Centres for young people with specific personality disorders or early psychosis needing ongoing care. There is no additional information available regarding how these Specialist Care Centres will be run.
- \$225 million to roll out the rest of the 61 free Medicare Mental Health Centres promised by the current Labor Government, and to upgrade some existing Medicare Mental Health Centres. We know from listening to mental health consumers that the services and care provided by the current Medicare Mental Health Centres differ greatly, and call for consistency in the provision of consumer-led support.
- more than 1,200 training places for mental health professionals and peer workers will be available with an injection of \$90 million. While we welcome this initiative, further details as to the number of training places available and how the training will be delivered is required.



The Coalition's Election Commitments

The Opposition Leader Peter Dutton MP advised that if the Coalition is successful in winning the 2025 Federal Election, they **will double Medicare-subsidised mental health sessions from 10 to 20 and make this arrangement permanent.**

While the NMHCA welcomes the acknowledgement that 10 sessions per year are not enough for those of us with complex mental health challenges, it is concerned that this proposal puts access constraints on mental health consumers with high and medium support needs. There will continue to be high, out of pocket costs faced by mental health consumers even with the Medicare rebate.

The Opposition also announced an additional \$400 million for youth mental health services, along with an expansion of the remit of the National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health, into a National Institute. Peter Dutton MP advised that the Coalition will “boost regional services and expand treatment to Australia at the forefront of youth mental health treatment in the world” and we are waiting for further information regarding how this will be achieved.

There were no policies announced to increase benefits for people through Centrelink, including JobStart and the Disability Support Pension. Homelessness policies centred around ways to support people to purchase housing which will have little to no effect on the provision of suitable housing to those most in need.

Clarification Received

Clarification has been received that the following paragraph simply acknowledges the change of circumstances for the National Mental Health Commission that was made last year.

“...abolishment of the National Mental Health Commission, a non-corporate Commonwealth entity in the Health and Aged Care portfolio. The Department of Health and Aged Care, in the same portfolio, adopted the functions of the National Mental Health Commission.”

The NMHCA has participated in a review of the National Mental Health Commission, and we are awaiting the outcome of that process.



We can now confirm that :

The NMHCA has not received funding to develop and operate a National Mental Health Consumer Register.

The register would assist the NMHCA to support all Australian government agencies to continue and improve their engagement with mental health consumers through running focus groups, consultations and co-design sessions. The NMHCA had planned to take a whole of government (social determinants) approach by promoting the register to all relevant government agencies beyond the Department of Health and Aged Care to ensure services are co-designed with mental health consumers.

Priscilla Brice, CEO of the NMHCA, was disappointed that further funding was not forthcoming in the 2025 Federal Budget for the development and operation of a Mental Health consumer register. The voice of people with lived experience of mental health challenges to influence policies and projects that directly impact them will be diminished because of this decision.

No additional funding has been made available for the establishment of a Chief Consumer Role in the Department of Health and Aged Care.

To ensure the perspective of people with lived experience of mental health challenges are represented at the most senior levels of the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC), the NMHCA sought funding for a Chief Mental Health Consumer to join the other Chief roles including Chief Psychiatrist, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, and Chief Health Economist. The proposed role should be tasked with ensuring a consumer voice within the Department and focus on reform towards a human rights model. The Chief Mental Health Consumer would ensure that a consumer lens is considered at a high level when critical decisions about mental healthcare are made by the Australian Government.

"It is disappointing that mental health consumers have so far been denied a voice at the highest level within the public service", Priscilla Brice, CEO of the NMHCA, said today. "We look forward to working with the Government on this, and will continue to advocate for this role to be established soon."

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Read our full budget analysis, including announcements from the Albanese government on broad mental health could directly affect mental health care and health announcements that could positively impact mental health consumers.



Read our full Budget Analysis

<https://nmhca.org.au/announcements/>



Read our Election Platform

<https://nmhca.org.au/announcements/>