

For immediate release

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State Budget 21/22: a promising step towards fixing a broken system

Victoria's three leading community managed mental health providers have welcomed the focus on mental health in today's Victorian State Budget. The record-breaking \$3.8 billion investment – more than four times the previous year – shows mental health is a priority, and that the Government is ready for reform.

The CEOs of Mind Australia, Neami National and Wellways Australia firmly agree that the 2021-22 Budget demonstrates the Government's committed to improving the mental health system, while adopting recommendations to ensure the changes are sustainable and protected well into the future.

Wellways Australia CEO Laura Collister commended the Government for delivering a budget that has responded to the voices of lived experience.

"To have the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing all 65 recommendations from the Royal Commission reinforced in the Budget papers provides much needed clarity for the community managed mental health sector," Ms Collister said.

"The fundamental changes that have been recommended by the Royal Commission will take time, and the 10-year timeline outlined by the Budget provides some level of comfort as to how the implementation of the 65 recommendations will be funded," said Ms Collister.

Mind Australia CEO Gill Callister said, "this is an extraordinary investment in root and branch reform of our whole system."

"The budget's comprehensive focus on children and young people recognises the importance of early intervention, with \$141 million towards five new youth PARC services, will make a very big difference in the outcomes for young people grappling with serious mental health issues."

"With more than \$1.5 billion being directed towards community-based care, the commitment of \$954 million to provide health and wellbeing support – psychosocial supports – through the expansion of the 22 new area mental health and wellbeing services will make it easier to access the services people need, when they need it," said Ms Callister.

Neami National CEO Tom Dalton said, "the budget's commitment to providing access to services directly in the community and in people's homes is the best way to improving the mental health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable in our community."

The crucial element in this transformation will be ensuring that the systems and processes are in place to implement the reforms. Early and on-going leadership from people with lived experience will be crucial to getting it right," said Mr. Dalton

The Victorian State Budget has provided a pathway to reform, with all three CEOs looking forward to working in collaboration with the Victorian Government to implement changes that improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

With last week's Federal Mental Health budget funding, there is a real opportunity for the two spheres of government to work together to ensure we have a cohesive mental health system for Victorians.

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About Mind Australia

Mind Australian (Mind) is one of the country's leading community-managed specialised mental health service providers. We have been supporting people who are dealing with the day-to-day impacts of mental ill-health, as well as their families, friends and carers for 40 years. Our staff deliver a range of services and supports to people challenged by mental ill-health. Mind also operates as a provider of services and supports to individuals who have NDIS funding packages in multiple locations across Australia.

Mind significantly invests in research about mental health recovery and psychosocial disability and shares this knowledge, developing evidence informed new service models, evaluating outcomes, and providing training for peer workers and mental health professionals. We also advocate for, and campaign on basic human rights for everyone; constantly challenging the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health issues.

About Neami National

Neami National (Neami) is a not-for-profit Community Managed Organisation providing specialist, community-based mental health services. Neami has over 31 years' experience supporting people along the continuum of mental health need, with a focus on those people experiencing severe mental ill-health and the most complex needs. We support over 9,000 people nationally each year across a range of services.

Neami's overarching vision of full citizenship for all people living with a mental illness in Australian society underpins an emphasis on social inclusion and community connection in the way we collaborate with people and work to our mission of improving mental health and wellbeing in local communities. We use a collaborative recovery approach, which is informed by current research and backed by over three decades of experience in the community managed mental health sector.

About Wellways Australia

Wellways Australia is a leading for-purpose mental health and community services organisation dedicated to ensuring all Australians lead active and fulfilling lives in their community. We work with people with mental health challenges and people living with disability and others facing disadvantage to help them create the life they want to live. We have a commitment to ensuring that all the people we serve have opportunities to fully participate in the community, and we actively work to embed ourselves in communities to build communities that seek out and welcome the participation of everyone. Community inclusion underpins all our efforts as an organisation.

We advocate for policy change to make sure people can access the best possible care and information when they need it. because we recognise for people to succeed there needs to be equitable access to services and supports for all people, and the elimination of barriers to community participation, including stigma and systemic discrimination.

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