

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA  
ACT  
2600

Re: Reshaping mental health services

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you in response to your announcement of “an historic agreement to reshape mental health services.”

We welcome your commitment to reshape mental health services and look forward to your Government announcing a plan to achieve change on a genuinely historic scale. Major change in mental health is urgently needed and we are committed to working with the Australian Government to develop an appropriately planned, resourced and coordinated program to achieve this change.

We also welcome the Minister for Health and Ageing’s announcement of “a new national leadership role for the Australian Government in delivering much-needed service improvements for people with mental illness and their carers in this country.” It is our shared view that the unifying goal of the Australian Government’s new role in mental health must be to end the inequality in access to quality care between mental health and physical health. We therefore request that your Government explicitly makes its core policy objective in mental health achieving ready access to quality mental health care based on need.

We further welcome the announcement that mental health will be on the agenda at COAG in 2011. We believe addressing the deep structural and funding issues that underpin low rates of access to quality care for Australians with mental ill-health requires sustained attention from heads of governments over a number of years. However, we equally believe that the need for reform is urgent, that significant additional announcements in mental health are required over the coming weeks and months and that a long-term approach must not delay actions that are achievable immediately.

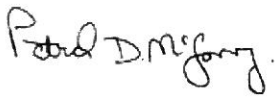
In particular, we note with concern that the new health funding announcements may exacerbate one of the key structural barriers to change – that mental health’s share of the health budget (6%) is significantly less than both its share of Australia’s health burden (14.2%) and of the recommendation of the 2006 Senate Select Committee on mental health (9-12%). We note that the 2006 COAG agreement was described by the then Prime Minister as the first step of an ongoing process of reform and that the new funding announced at that time represented just 20% of the total requirement identified by the Senate Select Committee.

The \$116m of new mental health specific funding announced as part of the new COAG health agreement represents just about 2% of the \$5.4bn of new health funding for 2010-11 through to 2013-14. This figure will improve if mental health secures a significant portion of the new funding announced for sub-acute beds. But much more is needed to begin addressing the structural underfunding of the mental health sector.

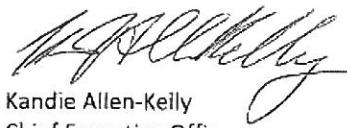
Overall, we believe that through its agreement with States and Territories, the Australian Government has created an opportunity to fundamentally reshape the mental health system to the benefit of the millions of Australians who experience mental ill-health each year. To realise the potential of this opportunity, we recommend that the Australian Government:

- commit to achieving ready access to quality mental health care based on need
- work in partnership with State and Territory governments and the mental health sector to develop, resource, publish and implement a new mental health reform program
- comprehensively strengthen community mental health services by investing in both further expanding the youth mental health models of care supported in the COAG announcement and by substantially enhancing supports for other key points in the lifespan – particularly for children and older adults

We are committed to playing our role in supporting the Australian Government in achieving these goals.



Professor Patrick McGorry  
2010 Australian of the Year



Kandie Allen-Keily  
Chief Executive Officer




Kim Ryan  
Chief Executive Officer




Professor Ian Hickie AM  
Executive Director




Lyn Littlefield  
Executive Director




Dr Andrew Pesce  
President




Jonathan Nicholas  
Provisional CEO




Dawn O'Neil  
Chief Executive Officer



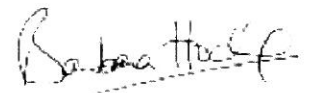

David Crosbie  
Chief Executive Officer




Elizabeth Crowther  
Chief Executive




Professor Louise Newman  
President

Barbara Hocking OAM  
Executive Director



*Leonie Young*

Leonie Young  
Chief Executive Officer



*Joe Calleja*

Joe Calleja  
Chief Executive Officer



*Joan Hughes*

Joan Hughes  
Chief Executive Officer



*John Mendoza*

John Mendoza  
Chair  
National Advisory Council  
on Mental Health

*A MALAK*

Professor Abd Malak,  
Chairperson  
Multicultural Mental Health  
Australia



*Joy Gillett*

Joy Gillett  
Chief Executive Officer



*Kim Koop*

Kim Koop  
Chief Executive Officer



Psychiatric Disability Services  
of Victoria (VICSERV)

Enrique "Topo" Rodriguez  
Chief Executive Officer and  
Founder



Topo Foundation for EDUCATION  
www.TF4E.org

Sharon Austin  
General Manager



peer support australia

Professor Helen Christensen  
Director



Centre for Mental  
Health Research

Sandra Vidot  
Chief Executive Officer



MIFWA  
mental illness  
fellowship of WA

*Tony Fowke*

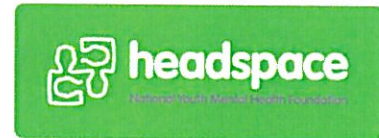
Tony Fowke  
President

Mental Health Carers



*Chris Tanti*

Chris Tanti  
Chief Executive Officer



Mike Seward  
Executive Director  
Board Members of Arafmi Mental  
Health Carers and Friends Association  
(WA) Inc



Arafmi

Mental Health Carers & Friends Association

*Natasha Miliotis*

Natasha Miliotis  
CEO  
Mental Illness Fellowship of SA



mifSA  
MENTAL ILLNESS  
FELLOWSHIP  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*Gareth Wreford*

Gareth Wreford, Executive  
Director  
Arts Access Australia



Arts Access Australia

*Dr Lesley Russell*

Dr Lesley Russell  
Menzies Foundation Fellow  
Menzies Centre for Health Policy

Kate Shipway  
President



Peninsula Carer Council Inc.

**Peninsula Carer Council Inc.**

Phil Robinson  
Chair



Mental Illness Education ACT



Gwenda Cannard  
Chief Executive Officer



Dea Delaney Thiele  
Chief Executive Officer



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY  
CONTROLLED HEALTH ORGANISATION  
**NACCHO**



Anne Wicking  
Chief Executive Officer



Karen Oakley  
Executive Officer



Dr Chris Mitchell  
President



**THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN  
COLLEGE OF  
GENERAL PRACTITIONERS**

Jenna Bateman  
Chief Executive Officer



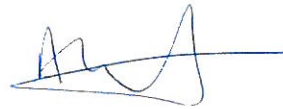
Mental Health  
Coordinating Council



Dr. Cathy Kezelman  
Chairperson



Michelle Swallow  
Chief Executive Officer



Alyson Miller  
Chief Executive Officer



Adrian Harris  
President  
Australian Creative Arts  
Therapy Association



Ann White  
Executive Director  
Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health



Peak body representing  
the community-based  
mental health sector in WA



Kasy Chambers  
Executive Director  
**ANGLICARE**  
AUSTRALIA

Psychotherapy & Counselling  
Federation of Australia



David Butt  
Chief Executive Officer



Claire Hewat  
Chief Executive Officer



Jeff Cheverton  
Chief Executive Officer –  
QLD Alliance

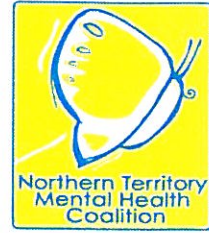


Catherine O'Toole  
President

Vivienne Miller  
Conference Director

David Lovegrove  
Chair

Phil Dempster  
Manager



Janne McMahon OAM  
Independent Chair

Rob Ramjan AM  
Chief Executive Officer

Isabell Collins  
Consumer Co-Chair



Private Mental Health  
Consumer Carer Network (Australia)  
*engage. empower. enable choice in private mental health.*



Keiran Booth  
Carer Co-Chair

Jenny Allen  
Chief Executive Officer



Toni McInnes  
Manager



Professor Max Bennett  
Australian Neuroscience Society

Cath Bartolo  
Chief Executive Officer

Kingsley Bedwell  
Chief Executive Officer



Helen Christensen  
Australasian Society for  
Psychiatric Research

Kirsty Greenwood  
Executive Officer



Youth and Family Service  
(Logan City) Inc.



Brooke McKail  
Executive Officer

David Meldrum  
Executive Director



Professor Graham Burrows AO KCSJ  
Chair



Mental Health  
Foundation Australia

