



Media Release

The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Federal Member for Flinders

**Shadow Minister for Climate Action,
Environment and Heritage**

Friday, 30th August 2013

Commitment to Improve Youth Mental Health

A Coalition government will provide further help to young people facing mental illness by establishing a National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health.

Youth mental health is a growing issue both here in the Flinders electorate and across Australia.

Close to 300 people, including students, teachers and parents attended my Youth Mental Health Forum at Dromana Secondary College earlier this month.

The forum heard former Australian of the Year and youth mental health advocate Professor Patrick McGorry talk about the importance of early intervention in mental health issues.

Representatives from youth mental health foundation Headspace, Peninsula Pride, Victoria Police and the Mornington Peninsula Shire also made presentations at the forum.

The overwhelming message to come from the forum is that help is available to our young people and the earlier they seek help, the better.

Seventy-five per cent of all mental illness manifests itself in people under the age of 25 and one in three young people experience moderate to high levels of psychological distress at some point. Suicide is the leading cause of death for young Australians aged 15 to 24.

The Coalition's \$18 million commitment to the National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health will bolster our response to youth mental health by:

- undertaking cutting edge clinical trials to find new treatments for mental illness in young people;
- investing in new programmes of research that specifically seek to reduce deliberate self-harm and suicide;
- providing training, career support and information resources for up to 12,000 mental health clinicians and service planners by 2020; and
- perfecting new forms of intervention that can be used to treat young people through Headspace, Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres and e-mental health services.

The Coalition will continue to support the expansion of Headspace to 100 centres nation-wide. This was an important initiative established by the previous Coalition government when Tony Abbott was the Minister for Health.

Increasingly, young people are in the first instance seeking advice and help online. Finding the right help is not easy, so the Coalition will provide the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre with

\$5 million to establish a comprehensive new e-mental health platform that will make it easier for young people to get the help they need and to manage their treatment.

This investment will help bring together a wide range of existing services into one platform.

The Coalition will also task the National Mental Health Commission to assess the effectiveness of all existing mental health programmes across both government and the non-government sectors. The goal of this comprehensive review will be to ensure services are being properly targeted at patients, that services are not being duplicated and that programmes are not being unnecessarily burdened by red tape.

Improving the mental health of Australians facing mental illness is part of our *Real Solutions* Plan to build a stronger Australia and a better future for all Australians.

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