MEDIA STATEMENT

ACMHN’s response to the 2019-2020 Budget

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) welcomes the budget initiatives however there is more work that needs to be done.

ACMHN CEO, Kim Ryan said, “the $736.6 million announcement is a start but much more is required, we need a whole of sector bi partisan plan to build a more responsive and integrated system.”

The College also welcomes the announcement of new funding of $144 million for a trial of eight coordinated mental health hubs nationally, to help develop a key alternative to hospital emergency departments with programs to be integrated with PHNs and state services.

Ms Ryan said that we agree with the Treasurer Hon Josh Frydenberg’s comments made last night that “it is a national tragedy that we lose so many people to suicide and so many people live a life of quiet desperation”.

She also said that whilst she appreciates the additional funding announcement for mental health, she was disappointed that once again the Budget fails to address the development of a mental health workforce.

The government would not be able to address its long term national health plan if they are not committed to developing a nursing workforce that will seize the future.

“Mental health nurses are the largest and most geographically distributed clinical mental health workforce in the country skilled to work within the health system across all age groups, and should be front of mind when addressing our mental health system” Kim stated after the announcement.

The College will continue to work with the government for the upcoming election and will be once again highlighting issues around the development of the nursing workforce.

Key budget measures include:

- Expanding Headspace ($262 million, over 7 years)
- Supporting Early Psychosis Youth Services ($110 million over 2 years)
- Indigenous Suicide Prevention ($14.5 million over 4 years)
- Early childhood and parenting support ($11.8 million)
- Community Mental Health Centres (114.5 million over 6 years)
- Residential Eating Disorders Centres ($63 million 7 years)
- Mentally Healthy Workplaces ($15.2 million over 4 years)
- Perinatal Mental Health ($44 million over 7 years)
- Natural Disaster Support ($5.5 million over 4 years)
- Projects including Mind Garden ($7 million), Roses in the Ocean (1.2 million, and HALT Suicide Prevention $2 million

END
Available for interview – Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan

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