MEDIA STATEMENT
2018-19 Budget Shines Spotlight on Older Australians’ Mental Health

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) welcomes the announcement of various funding measures for mental health in the Commonwealth Budget, particularly the strong focus on older persons’ mental health.

The Budget includes funding of $20 million to address social isolation and loneliness among older Australians. Funding will be provided to the ACMHN to co-design and pilot a service for people living in the community aged over 75 years assessed as having, or at high risk of, mental health and health conditions associated with social isolation and/or loneliness.

It is anticipated the pilot will take place in three regions to be selected on the basis of available workforce and that represent a cross-section of the population with various geographic and demographic profiles.

“We are very pleased the Commonwealth Government has recognised that substantial action needs to be taken to improve the mental health and wellbeing of older members of the community”, said ACMHN’s chief executive Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan.

Over the last two years, Ms. Ryan has been actively advocating and championing the mental health and well-being of older Australians especially following the release of data showing high suicide rates among older people living in the community and in residential aged care, particularly among older men.

“This is a significant investment for older Australians who experience, or are at high risk of experiencing, mental illness”, said Ms. Ryan.

The ambitious 2018-19 Budget also includes funding of $82.5 million to provide mental health services for residents of aged care facilities with a diagnosed mental disorder who are currently ineligible to receive some funded psychological services.

The ACMHN look forward to working with the government and key stakeholders to improve the mental health and wellbeing of older Australians.

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Available for interview or comment ACMHN CEO Adjunct Professor Kim Ryan

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