MEDIA RELEASE

Mental Health Nurses frustrated with mental health system

Mental health nurses are frustrated with the lack of investment to help people with mental illness.

Mental health nurses can make a big difference to the lives of people with mental illness. This was shown in the ABC Four Corners story, Hidden Voices.

‘Australians with mental health issues need access to specialist mental health nursing care.

The mental health nurses interviewed by Four Corners are helping people stay well, stay out of hospital, and in some cases, stay alive.’ said Kim Ryan, CEO of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses.

But mental health nurses are in short supply due to a long term failure to invest in this critical component of the mental health workforce. Unless immediate action is taken, mental health agencies will struggle to provide mental health services to Australians in the future.

‘Any investment in mental health, whether it is the $1.5 billion from the Opposition or $270 million from the ALP, will go nowhere without mental health nurses to run the mental health services, within hospitals and the community,’ Ms Ryan said.

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is calling on the major political parties to ensure all Australians have access to mental health care provided by specialist mental health nurses.

The four priority areas for the mental health nursing workforce identified by the ACMHN in its 2010 Election Statement are:

1. Ensure all nurses have a strong foundation in mental health
2. Provide specialist Mental Health Nursing education pathways
3. Implement strategies to increase the supply of Mental Health Nurses
4. Commit to providing specialist Mental Health Nursing care for all Australians with mental health issues

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