



Seeding mental health reform in Victoria

The 2008-09 State Budget allocates a total of \$111 million to seed mental health reforms in Victoria. This includes \$76.6 million over the next four years for a package of measures to commence significant reform of mental health services across Victoria. This is in addition to \$6.6 million for postnatal depression as part of *Healthy mothers and babies* initiative and \$8.3 million to fund expansion of mental health services. This is in addition to \$34.4 million over four years to provide essential infrastructure to support the reform.

This reform is about rebalancing the mental health system towards earlier intervention and supporting recovery within an integrated community based system. Recovery, stronger support for children, young people and families, and improved responses for people with complex health and social needs are major themes of the reform program.

The policy context for this proposal is the new Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy, which is anticipated to be finalised in late 2008. Planned changes will extend the outreach capacity of mental health services while building the ability of other sectors to respond effectively to mental health issues.

Initiatives in the current budget package have been selected for early commencement because they address the most significant risks and gaps in current service delivery models, and/or trial new service delivery models where considerable lead time is required to achieve change. The initiatives focus on:

- reconfiguring the front end of the services system by improving the way people access, and are referred to, mental health care and support
- redesigning and expanding services for children, young people and families and
- developing new approaches to supporting people with mental health disorders in community housing.

Funding for these measures commences with \$14.3 million in 2008-09, rising to \$21.2 million in 2011-12.

Streamlining access to mental health care: - \$15.9 million over four years

People unfamiliar with the mental health system can find it difficult to locate information about specialist and other relevant services, and the respective role and focus of those services. New funding will provide streamlined, timely access to the right care for people with mental health problems.

Two interrelated initiatives will provide a highly visible point of information, referral and advice for the community, supported by enhancements to specialist mental health triage and service entry. This will build on existing protocols with emergency departments and emergency services as key partners in supporting access to specialist services.

New statewide 24/7 community information referral and advice service

Funding commencing in 2008-09 will provide the community with information and 24/7 telephone access to standardised screening-level assessment and referral to appropriate services, including specialist mental health services where required. Clear information on



mental health and pathways to care will support consumers, carers and families in the community.

Enhanced specialist mental health triage

This initiative will further develop specialist mental health triage services in metropolitan and regional areas. This builds on the success of previous work undertaken in a pilot site and strengthens the 24 hours a day, seven days a week specialist mental health triage response provided at the local level, including referrals from existing consumers, carers and local service providers. This initiative will support the Crisis Assessment and Treatment (CAT) teams to provide intensive treatment in the community

Intervening earlier: achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families – \$16.8 million over four years

Identifying problems earlier and providing more timely access to mental health care is the focus of a package of initiatives aimed at improving service responses for children, young people and their families.

The reforms recognise the need for more widespread responses to mental health problems among children and young people delivered as part of core services within our communities (including early years services, schools, GPs), the need for greater capacity for specialist mental health care for those with severe and complex problems, and better supports for families and carers.

The *Child and youth service redesign* initiative will test ways to more effectively deliver age appropriate, evidence-based programs that remove current barriers to early intervention and continuity of care. These service developments, which will be trialled in one metropolitan and one regional area, will bring together services involved in the everyday lives of children, young people and families.

Enhanced family support will be provided for vulnerable families and at risk children where a parent has a mental illness through expansion and broadening of the *Families where a parent has a mental illness Strategy* to include parents with drug and alcohol problems and delivery of support in partnership with Child First agencies.

These initiatives will be complemented by new investment of \$6.6 million over four years under the *Healthy mothers and babies Budget initiative to support mothers and expectant mothers*. This funding will enable a comprehensive statewide approach to identification of and responses to mental health problems, particularly postnatal depression, among parents as part of a new national program.

Strengthening support for people with mental illness to live in the community - \$8.7 million over four years

Funding is provided to develop new approaches to supporting people with mental illness to live in community housing. A total of \$3.1 million over four years will assist people to achieve stability in accommodation and other aspects of their lives through a new *Supportive Housing* model. An initial trial will provide intensive on-site support for 100



people, around half of whom will have severe mental health problems. Support will be provided to maintain tenancy, address support needs and to promote community inclusion.

New funding will also expand the capacity of the psychiatric disability support sector to support people who require intensive and sustained psychosocial and clinical outreach support to live in various types of independent housing. The funding will enable different levels of support to be provided based on assessed need and be targeted at developing appropriate support models for adults and young people with serious mental illness exiting correctional facilities, mental health treatment facilities and homelessness services. The funding will provide an extra 50 individualised packages in the first year, growing to 100 individualised packages per annum in the second and subsequent years.

Prevention and Recovery Care Beds - \$28.7 million over four years

The 2008-09 Budget provides funding to bring additional Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) services into operation to provide improved access to step-up/step down bed based care as an alternative to hospital inpatient care. This builds on funding provided in the 2007-08 Budget for a 20-bed PARC facility at Deer Park and provides recurrent funding for two 10 bed PARC facilities in Broadmeadows and Preston. It also reinforces Victoria's position as the leading State in providing alternatives to inpatient treatment as shown in the *National Mental Health Report 2007*.

Additional boosts to service capacity

Additional new recurrent funding to address mental health needs is also provided in this Budget, with \$2 million per annum for mental health services at Maroondah and Lilydale.

Significant demand pressure is placed on health services for the management of children with eating disorders. Additional funding of \$600,000 each year from 2008-09 is provided to continue the boost previously given to address paediatric eating disorder services at The Royal Children's Hospital, Southern Health and Austin Health.

A total of \$6.5 million over four years is provided to address increased complexity and demand pressure in public hospital mental health services.

Investing in mental health infrastructure

The 2008-09 Budget will invest \$34.4 million over four years to enhance mental health infrastructure to support the reform. This includes:

Ballarat Hospital – mental health redevelopment - \$5.5 million

Funding of \$5.5 million will be provided to reconfigure the mental health Adult Acute Unit to improve access and client amenity and to refurbish the Queen Victoria building to accommodate Community Mental Health facilities.



Dandenong Hospital mental health redevelopment and expansion – planning - \$3 million

Funding has been provided to progress the detailed planning of the proposed redevelopment and expansion of Dandenong Hospital area mental health services, which will increase beds from 77 to 150, comprising additional acute, secure extended care and residential beds.

Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital mental health redevelopment - \$15.5 million

Funding is provided to redevelop the Veterans' Psychiatry Unit (VPU) at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital (HRH) as a free-standing, purpose built facility for the provision of highly specialized trauma related mental health services, incorporating veterans' psychiatry. The new facility will be known as the *Centre for Trauma Related Mental Health Services*. The funding will also allow for demolition works and planning for the future use of the site.

Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) services– stage 2 - \$10.4 million

Funding of \$10.4 million is committed to developing PARC facilities to provide transitional 'step-down' services for people recovering from acute illness who need additional support to successfully manage in the community. PARC services also provide 'step-up' services for people at risk who require a more intensive treatment and support program to avoid the need for inpatient admission to an acute treatment facility. This stage of the project will provide 30 new beds in three new community-based facilities affiliated with Maroondah, Monash Medical Centre and Peninsula hospitals, completing the 2006 Government election commitment to the development of 70 new PARCs beds in Victoria.