

MEDIA RELEASE

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Victorian Budget 2017-18 - Mental Health Crisis Begins Remission

'The Victorian Government is to be commended for delivering a 2017/18 Budget that begins to address the crisis in the mental health sector. The \$325.7 million investment is the highest ever and includes more mental health beds and emergency capacity in hospitals. It is also the first time the state government has funded Aboriginal-controlled health organisations to provide specialist mental health and drug and alcohol care. This budget addresses the needs of many Victorians who are often forgotten' said CEO Marie Piu.

Summary of mental health initiatives:

- \$85.2m for expansion of forensic mental health services, with an additional 6,750 Mental Health Court Liaison Services per year;
- Expansion of the Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) List;
- Provision of mental health supports for after-hours bail hearings;
- Six community forensic mental health programs (CFMHP) to expand treatment for offenders on a Community Corrections Order;
- Specialist mental health education for Victoria Police to improve police capability to manage incidents involving people with a mental illness;
- \$8.4m for Aboriginal-controlled health services to provide mental health support;
- Continued prevention and early detection of perinatal depression;
- \$63m for a new emergency facility at Monash, including an exclusive area for mental health;
- \$8.3m for a Grampians Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) service,
- \$10 m for Facilities Renewal Grants for mental health and drug and alcohol facilities.
- Increased funding to the Mental health Tribunal
- \$10m funding to continue the NDIS Transition Support Package (TSP) to prepare participants, their families and carers and service providers for transition to the NDIS.

Tandem is pleased that it will be able to continue to support families and carers to understand and engage with the NDIS as part of the TSP. Tandem awaits further clarification, however, as to how the needs of the significant numbers of people living with serious mental illness and their families and carers who will **not** qualify for support under the NDIS will be addressed.

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Tandem joins all Victorians in applauding the Andrews Government for making such a historic \$1.9 billion commitment over four years to help implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. This major investment will have a positive ripple effect throughout the community.

Tandem also notes other positive initiatives with a flow on effect to users of mental health services, families and carers, and staff:

- Implementation of the Targeting Zero review led by Stephen Duckett into the quality and safety of Victoria's health system
- Addressing occupational violence against health workers and workplace bullying
- Investment in social housing
- Meeting demand for Ambulance Emergency Services
- Supporting Community legal Centres
- LGBTI Diversity Supports
- Concessions to pensioners & beneficiaries 'through a low income health care card
- Delivering 'Safe and Strong' – the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

"While these investments are welcomed by mental health carers, Tandem calls for specific investment in support services for Victorian mental health carers. According to a recent study commissioned by MIND Australia 'The economic value of informal mental health caring in Australia' Victorian mental health carers contribute \$ 3.3 billion of informal or unpaid care each year," said CEO Marie Piu.

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