

THE ONLY SPECIALIST UNION FOR DISABILITY, MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES IN VICTORIA

MENTAL HEALTH INVESTMENT WELCOME, BUT STAFFING SHORTAGE MUST BE ADDRESSED

In its 2018/19 State Budget the Andrews Government has finally begun to recognise the urgency of the crisis facing the mental health sector.

HACSU welcomes the record \$705 million investment in mental health services across the state.

In particular:

- \$232 million for new and existing acute in-patient beds, alongside improving access to community-based teams.
- Six new emergency department crisis hubs for patients presenting with urgent mental health, drug and alcohol issues at the Monash Medical Centre, St Vincent's, Royal Melbourne, Geelong, Sunshine and Frankston Hospitals.
- Extra funding for Prevention and Recovery Care (PARCs).
- \$32.5 million for new initiatives to protect the workforce from occupational violence.

HACSU Assistant State Secretary, Paul Healey, welcomed the new measures, stating: "This record spend shows that the Andrews Government is finally giving the mental health sector the attention it deserves after years of underinvestment."

While acknowledging the record investment, Mr Healey implored the Andrews Government to focus on addressing the chronic staff shortage across Victoria.

"While we acknowledge the record investment, without measures to attract and retain a skilled mental health workforce, Victorians experiencing mental illness won't be able to access the treatment they need."

"Currently there are approximately 350 unfilled mental health positions across the state."

"In July 2014 the then Napthine Government announced funding for 25 new acute mental health beds at Werribee Mercy Hospital. While the beds have been established, they have never run at full capacity due to chronic staff shortages.

"Our concern is that without a focus on building workforce supply, the new services coming out of today's Budget will take too long to run at capacity."

"HACSU looks forward to working with the Andrews Government to ensure that this record investment actually delivers for Victorians experiencing mental illness."

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