

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mental Health Care in WA Set Back 20 Years

Cuts to mental health care funding in WA undermines everything that has been achieved in the last 20 years for better mental health care service provision.

Community organisations and related services that provide essential care for the community will now close their doors as a result of 4.5 million in cuts by the West Australian Government.

The WA State Government will withdraw existing funding as well as funding promised to key initiatives in the election. The result will force NGOs to close.

Mental Health Council of Australia Chair Mr Keith Wilson said the kinds of services which will be lost as a result of the funding cuts can be categorised as those services which prevent illnesses and achieve improved quality of life.

“As a result of the cuts, WA will be placed in a position where there will be far fewer programs to prevent people from becoming unwell,” Mr Wilson said.

“We will arrive at a state where there will be no framework to support very ill people and their families,” he said.

“The direction the State Government is taking WA mental health care provision to, is a place where there will only be traditional clinical care,” Mr Wilson said.

“Our mental health care system will amount to a safety net at the bottom of the cliff. These cuts will affect the most vulnerable people in our community,” he concluded.

MHCA CEO Dr Grace Groom said the WA State Government’s argument that these funding cuts are a result of being short changed by the Commonwealth is ludicrous.

“The Commonwealth has never been responsible for mental health care. This responsibility has always rested with the State Governments. This is nothing short of buck passing by the West Australian Government,” Dr Groom said.

“If the WA Government has really been short changed by the Commonwealth, this would be the case for all the States and Territories, yet WA is the only State making these kind of cuts to mental health organisations,” she said.

Those available for interview include:

- MHCA Chair Keith Wilson on 0417 289 040
- MHCA CEO Dr Grace Groom on 0417 289 461

For further inquiries or to assist with arranging interviews contact Gabrielle Crowe, Communications & Policy Officer on (02) 6285 3100 or 0415 415 153