

I have tried to access the standard form unsuccessfully. Accordingly please accept the comments below.

The 2011-12 Budget appears to offer out year funding (years 4 and 5) and no real funding for financing our growing mental health issues. Better Access I understand is being an issue for all professions with social work and occupational therapy now being heard. I agree with this direction. I however would be remis if I did not question the absence of the exceptional claims clause which is vital to deeply troubled people.

I implore you to mandate, promote and encourage through rewarding incentives organizations across primary, secondary and tertiary care that offer greater outcomes and processes through better co-operation, co-ordination and communication. We should not be constructing more silos with each building their own empire. Indeed the medicare rebate system should be open to registered health care professionals operating consistent with the national mental health standards. No single profession should receive preferential treatment.

Workforce shortages are illusionary as key employers put up barriers rather than accepting responsibility for developing entry level professionals. Mental health funding needs to be benchmarked to the levels identified in the earlier senate report and indexed to ensure relevance, sustainability and well-being.

People in remote and regional areas may have specific cultural and other differences that make one size fit all responses unworkable.

In closing I wonder if the employment and education committee submissions are being considered as inputs for your inquiry.

Stephen Graham Brown
Social Worker and Community Advocate