



**THE AUSTRALIAN CITY MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE
RESPONSE TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REVIEW INTO MENTAL HEALTH
APRIL 2019**

WHO ARE WE

The Australian City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA) is currently being established, building on the successful model initially set up in London in 2013 as a business led and expert guided Alliance. The Australian CMHA aims to create a culture of good mental health for Australian workers, where everyone can talk openly about mental health without fear of stigma, and share good practice.

Our **vision** is to create mentally healthy workplaces by:

- § increasing mental health literacy across our member organisations
- § providing appropriate language and confidence to talk about mental health articulately and with impact
- § engaging proactively with the media to encourage a better understanding and positive reporting of mental health issues in Australian workplaces.
- § creating a culture of openness - supporting people, especially senior business leaders with experience of mental health problems, to tell their stories and inspire others to speak out about their experiences
- § enabling practical steps to be taken by employers - provide Australian employers with practical tools and the opportunity to share and hear other companies' experience

Founding members of the Australian City Mental Health Alliance are:

- **Clayton Utz**
- **Deloitte**
- **KPMG**
- **Microsoft**

COMMENTS TO THE COMMISSIONER

We are encouraged by the proposed lines of enquiry in relation to mentally healthy workplaces by the Commissioner and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further, and particularly to learn from the findings of the review in this regard, in order that the Australian CMHA can have the greatest impact.

We believe the CMHA model offers a unique opportunity to bring businesses together to maximise the social and economic returns from improving workplace mental health.

Some examples of the initiatives that have been implemented in the UK include:

- **Thriving at Work Guide**
The Stevenson Farmer independent review on mental health in the workplace put a stake in the ground for employer standards. The CMHA produced the first practical translation of that review for large corporates – the Thriving at Work Guide. This is a unique toolkit to help businesses become mentally healthy workplaces. The guide is now being recognized around the world as a structured, practical approach to building a strong mental health strategy at work. Now, firms can benchmark their mental health initiatives against CMHA’s core and enhanced standards for mental health.
- **Graduate research**
The CMHA undertook research into graduates to understand their experiences of mental ill-health and their concerns about entering the workplace.
- **Thriving from the Start Network**
In November 2018 the CMHA launched its Thriving from the Start Network. A new mental health community for those early in their careers. The Network provides a safe space for people to share their mental health experiences and feedback insights to senior business leaders.
- **World Economic Forum**
Perhaps one of the most telling signs that progress is being made, is that the CMHA was recognized as a key partner in taking the mental health agenda to the World Economic Forum 2019 in Davos
- **Sharing stories**
When the CMHA first set out six years ago, the team couldn’t find a single person willing to tell their mental health story. In the last year we have had numerous people – both senior leaders and those early in their career – talk openly about their experience of mental health. This is one of the most powerful ways to create a culture of openness and elicit change.

We hope to replicate some of these successes within the Australian CMHA.

In Australia our founding members are already taking positive steps to tackle mental health in the workplace. Each founding partner has a strategy or plan for mental wellbeing in the workplace that is owned by the leadership.

At Clayton Utz initiatives include:

- An internal peer support network throughout all levels of the firm including approximately 150 Mental Health Champions and 50 Accredited Mental Health First Aid Officers
- Training for all Partners and Employees on "Developing a Resilient Mindset."
- Access to an onsite senior psychologist for confidential counselling and coaching. Providing this service onsite helps to destigmatise mental health as well as overcoming barriers to seeking help. Counselling services are also available off-site
- Access to an online portal with articles and tips on mental health.

At Deloitte initiatives include:

- Education sessions delivered across the firm at all levels

- Information sessions held nationally during mental health awareness month and on R U OK day
- Using data to identify risk and protective factors (e.g. hours of work, travel) and implementing a range of actions to address team-based mental health e.g. team health checks, 'back to floor' events, 'safety stand-down', career breaks
- Embedding consistent positive psychology content throughout the Leadership and Learning curriculum
- Promoting healthy eating, physical activity and other factors that have a positive impact on mental wellbeing

At KPMG initiatives include:

- Enhancing existing Mental Health Peer Support network by delivering further Mental health Peer Support accreditation and extending the network reach with peer support circles
- Delivery of face to face workshops 'Engaging as a Leader - your role in Mental Health' for Partners and Directors. Supported by follow up email learning bites to support and continue to build Mental Health capability
- Co creation and launch of online REAL conversations elearn modules equipping our people with the theoretical knowledge and skills necessary to have and host real conversations about mental wellbeing as an "experiencer" and as a supporter
- Through KPMG's Corporate Citizenship Mental Health strategy, investing staff skills and experience by partnering with Not For Profits and peak bodies dedicated to supporting people with mental illness

At Microsoft initiatives include:

- Employee benefits which include Health Insurance and additional specific wellness benefits to enable employees to access specialist psychological services and aides
- Mental Health for Managers training for all leaders, on how to identify mental health issues in teams, how to have a conversation on a mental health issues, how to undertake a psychological risk assessment for self-harm risks, and how to build team resilience
- Training/workshops on how to speak up on mental health, how to support a colleague, and where to get help
- 20+ mental health first aiders at Microsoft – the Microsoft MATES program

As the Alliance develops in Australia we will be reflecting on the success of these initiatives, and looking at what else we can learn from one another and the wider membership we intend to involve, to help improve mental wellbeing in the workplace across Australia.

We note the specific questions raised by the Commissioner in relation to supporting small businesses and other employers to make their workplaces mentally healthy. The Australian City Mental Health Alliance recognizes this as a particular challenge that needs to be addressed and is exploring ways in which we could support small business as part of our core objectives. This might include:

- Providing resources and programs for small businesses to access
- Acting as a source of advice and guidance
- No fee membership of the CMHA for small business



- **Proactive engagement of small business in mentally healthy workplace initiatives by our members**

We welcome the work of the Productivity Commission, and further opportunities to engage in this important topic.

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