

# AUSTRALIAN ALLIED HEALTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

27 January 2020

Productivity Commission  
Inquiry – Mental Health  
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East  
**Melbourne VIC 8003**

Dear Sir/Madam

I write on behalf of the Australian Allied Health Leadership Forum (AAHLF) about the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Mental Health.

The Australian Allied Health Leadership Forum (AAHLF) is a collaboration of organisations working together on issues of national importance to the allied health sector. AAHLF is formally recognised as the appropriate forum to provide allied health workforce advice to the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council and the Health Services Principal Committee.

The unique strength of AAHLF is its ability to provide a collective view for allied health by providing a forum where issues can be discussed and consensus reached.

Members provide perspectives of:

- The national allied health workforce, including those working in the health, social services, disability, aged care and education sectors, through AHPA
- State-based public and private allied health services across all sectors through the National Allied Health Advisors and Chief Officers Committee
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health sector through Indigenous Allied Health Australia
- Rural and remote Allied Health professionals and services through Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health
- Education and the university Allied Health sector through the Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences

The attached statement sets out our position on how allied health can deliver better outcomes for people who experience mental ill health, in particularly highlighting the following:

- An opportunity exists for allied health professionals (AHPs) to be better utilised in the provision of effective and cost-efficient services to promote and maintain mental health and wellbeing in the community.
- The current relative lack of utilisation of AHPs has resulted in less effective and more expensive services for those at risk or with lived experience of mental illness.
- In addition, the social and economic impacts of mental illness are not being tackled as effectively as they could be.
- AHPs provide services that contribute to the minimisation of ill-health associated with mental illness through assessment, diagnosis, treatment, enablement and management.
- Models-of-care that focus solely on medical services for treating and managing mental illness are not supported either by current scientific evidence or consumers' experiences.



- The most effective, cost-efficient and sustainable treatment and management of mental illness is through integrated models of care involving medical, psychological, social and occupational interventions.
- When involved with people with mental health disorders, AHPs frequently work as part of an inter-professional team with general practitioners, psychiatrists, nurses, peer support workers and psychosocial support workers to provide comprehensive individualised care.
- There is growing evidence for the need for reform across the mental health workforce and models of care. Non-traditional interventions such as diet modification and exercise therapy have a role in treating mental illness, not just physical comorbidities.

Please do not hesitate to contact the AAHLF Secretariat  
to discuss any elements of our submission further.

Yours sincerely

Secretariat  
**Australian Allied Health Leadership Forum**

*Attach: AAHLF Position Statement: Mental Health*

