

## **More than 200 of Queensland's most vulnerable left in limbo**

Organisations affected by cuts in the 2016 Federal Budget to the National Partnership Agreement (the Agreement) are searching for answers, as funding for the Housing and Support Program (HASP) and Personalised Support Services (PSS) is set to be discontinued from 1 July 2016.

While formal written notification is yet to be received, QAMH is of the understanding that the State Government will not fund these programs that are critical for the support of more than 200 people with complex mental health needs in Queensland.

The Agreement currently provides funding to organisations to deliver critical community mental health supports. This funding is essential, as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will be rolled out as a staged process over the next three years in Queensland. There will be more than 200 people with complex needs including institutionalisation, intellectual disability, alcohol and other drug use, acquired brain injury in addition to mental health issues without funding and service provision, until access to the NDIS is available in their region.

Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH) Acting Chair, Craig-Stanley Jones was disappointed that there are no solutions forthcoming to addressing the gap that the funding discontinuation creates.

"Whilst the mental health sector is doing, and will continue to do, all it can to support affected parties with the resources it has available, it simply will not be adequate," Mr Stanley-Jones said. "These circumstances will be unprecedented for participants accessing the HASP and PSS who have always been supported by state and federal funding bodies. It is disappointing that there does not appear to be any solution coming from the State or Commonwealth as to how the needs of our most vulnerable community members are to be met going forward; some of whom receive up to 30 hours of support weekly."

QAMH CEO, Kris Trott acknowledged the frustration with the political circumstances that have led to this problem.

"We can see the challenges funding bodies face, particularly with the Commonwealth Government currently in caretaker mode. However, it is untenable that community members and the organisations that support them remain in limbo with no solution forthcoming; responsibility must be assumed somewhere along the line. The Commonwealth and State governments need to recognise the seriousness of the situation and determine a resolution before June 30 and the clock is ticking," Ms Trott said.

"QAMH has been working against the clock as 1 July looms. We have written to the State Minister for Health to raise concerns on behalf of our members, and to request clarification on the funding arrangements for those affected. We have met with representatives from Queensland Health to discuss this issue and its impacts. We have requested an urgent meeting with the State Minister for Health, who is, however, on leave and unavailable until 27 June. Finally, we are currently writing to the Queensland Premier, Federal Minister for Health, Federal Shadow Minister for Mental Health, and the Federal Opposition Leader to raise awareness of this issue and the plight of more than 200 vulnerable community members."

QAMH will continue to advocate for the community mental health sector and will continue to keep the public informed of any response to this issue.

**#ends**

Enquiries regarding this media release can be directed to the Manager, Business and Membership Development, Sue Pope on 0408 438 624 or email [spope@gamh.org.au](mailto:spope@gamh.org.au).

To arrange an interview with Ms Kris Trott, CEO of QAMH or one of our member organisations, please call our office on 07 3252 9411.