

MEDIA RELEASE



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QAMH SUPPORTS HARD HITTING LETTER TO COAG LEADERS' RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

The Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH), Queensland's peak body for the mental health sector, is one of over 90 health and welfare organisations which have signed a hard hitting letter to the Prime Minister and State leaders imploring them to work together to reform Australia's failing mental health system.

The letter, coordinated by Mental Health Australia and today sent to Federal and State leaders ahead of next week's COAG Leaders' Retreat, refers to previous COAG agreements, industry reports and even correspondence from COAG saying things should and will change, but insists not enough has been done.

QAMH Acting Chief Executive Officer, Amara Bains, said the Federal and State governments should act on commitments made in 2012 by implementing national, whole-of-life, outcomes-based targets to drive reform.

"We support a fully funded National Mental Health Agreement which assigns responsibilities across multiple portfolios," Ms Bains said.

"To address mental health issues we need a whole-of-government approach which means engaging with health, social and community services, education, employment, housing and justice.

"Collaborative healthcare can help address mental health issues before they become major problems and ultimately lead to a reduction in spiralling hospital costs.

"The Federal Government is mostly responsible for primary health providers and the State Governments are accountable for state hospitals, but the budgets of both are under increasing strain. It's time to work together."

The mental healthcare industry is also calling for increased investment in early intervention and prevention programs, expanded and streamlined services in the community directly where they are needed, and a guarantee of an acceptable standard of services for Australians who experience mental illness, and their carers.

Ms Bains said that the health sector will continue to struggle until someone stands up and champions genuine and significant change.

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