MEDIA RELEASE

31 December 2018

Support for anorexia nervosa medical research

The Liberal National Government will provide more than $600,000 for a new research project to improve the diagnosis, treatment and care of people with anorexia nervosa.

Anorexia nervosa is a type of eating disorder characterised by the persistent restriction of food and water intake, intense fear of gaining weight and disturbance in self-perceived weight.

This debilitating can have a devastating impact, not only on people’s physical and mental health, but also on their families.

There are more than one million Australians living with an eating disorder with anorexia by far the deadliest mental health condition in Australia.

Doctor Andrea Phillipou, from the Swinburne University of Technology, will receive $662,362 allocated by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to uncover the neurobiological underpinnings of anorexia nervosa to improve treatment for this condition.

Her research project will focus on identifying biomarkers that can be used as tools for the early diagnosis of anorexia nervosa and other psychiatric conditions.

The aim of this specific study is to assess this biomarker in detail to confirm its use in early diagnosis and treatment of anorexia nervosa.

For an illness associated with such severe consequences as anorexia nervosa, a biomarker is critical.

Thousands of families in Australia are affected by eating disorders each year and too many people face the difficult battle without the unique multi-disciplinary treatment they need.

Only this month our Government announced for the first time, those Australians with severe eating disorders will now be able to access a comprehensive treatment plan under Medicare.

Patients will be able to access up to 40 Medicare funded psychological and an up 20 dietetic sessions each year from November 1 next year.

The $110.7 million investment into the first dedicated Medicare item for eating disorders will benefit around 30,000 people each year living with these debilitating disorders, helping them to get better and stay out of hospital.

This critical research project will help us better understand the condition and is among National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grants worth more than $526 million.

Health and medical research is a key pillar supporting Australia’s world-class health system and is critical to improving healthcare and improving the health of our nation.

The 2018–19 Budget we provided a record total of $6 billion to Australia’s health and medical research sector, including $1.3 billion for a health and medical industry growth plan to drive a new era of better health care and fuel jobs and growth.

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