



## **THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP**

### **Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing**

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#### **NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PLAN WELCOMED**

The Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Christopher Pyne, welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement at the Council of Australian Governments today of a major new focus on Mental Health.

The development of a National Action Plan for mental health over the next three months will enable consideration of reform options to increase access to appropriate mental health services. It should also enable consideration of the accommodation and broader support needed to reduce the impact of mental illness in the community.

With one in five Australians suffering from a mental illness, it is critical that we work together, and I welcome the spirit of co-operation shown at COAG.

"I feel that along with the Australian Government's commitment to the Youth Mental Health Foundation, *beyondblue* and the Better Outcomes in Mental Health programme, today's agreement is another step towards the significant improvement of the mental health of Australians," Mr Pyne said.

"I also welcome the commitment of COAG to a greater focus on illicit drugs and mental health, including cannabis and amphetamines.

"I have urged state governments over the past few months to reassess cannabis laws in light of growing research showing a correlation between cannabis and mental health.

"While some states have heeded this call, others continue to drag their feet on this issue.

"Sending a clear message that cannabis is a dangerous, harmful substance is crucial in reducing its impact on mental health."

Mr Pyne also welcomed the announcement that the planned National Health Call Centre Network would include an enhanced capacity to support mental health.

"The National Health Call Centre Network will ensure that individuals with mental illness and their families have access to information and advice on mental health and other health issues 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of where they live," he said.

An additional \$20 million funded equally by the Australian government and the States and Territories will target the capacity of the National Health Call Centre Network to support mental health.

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