



## Prioritising Mental Health and Suicide Prevention – Prevention and Early Intervention (Pillar 1)

The Australian Government is investing \$86.2 million in the Prevention and Early Intervention pillar as part of the *National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan – Stage 2*.

This investment builds on the \$2.3 billion initial phase of the Plan, announced in the 2021–22 Budget. Together with other mental health and suicide prevention commitments worth \$648.6 million in the 2022–23 Budget, it takes the total value of the plan to nearly \$3 billion.

Since 2012–13, the Australian Government’s investment through the Health portfolio in mental health and suicide prevention has more than doubled (106% increase), growing from \$3.3 billion to an estimated \$6.8 billion in 2022–23.

Since 2012–13, the Australian Government has driven significant developments in prevention and early intervention including:

- boosting digital mental health and suicide prevention supports, including through Lifeline, Beyond Blue, and Kids Helpline, and establishing dedicated services in response to natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, including Beyond Blue’s COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing phone line and Lifeline’s 13HELP Bushfire crisis line
- launching the world’s first *National Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* focused on the mental health and wellbeing needs of children from birth through to 12 years of age, and
- implementing the Individual Placement and Support program in 50 headspace locations nationally to improve the educational and employment outcomes of young people aged up to 25 with mental illness.

Our Government is committed to delivering services which provide appropriate care as early as possible.

2022–23 Budget measures for mental ill health prevention and early intervention include:

- \$63.6 million over four years to continue support for digital mental health services in response to the ongoing pandemic pressure, including Lifeline’s 13HELP Line, and increased demand for crisis support and suicide prevention

- \$9.7 million to help teachers and school leaders to better understand and respond to the mental health and wellbeing of Australian school students
- \$3.9 million to contribute to evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention research activities and services delivered by the Thompson Institute at the University of the Sunshine Coast
- \$3.3 million to support the Raise Foundation to deliver its best-practice, early intervention and prevention student mentoring program to vulnerable students for a further two years, and
- \$1.8 million for the Raising Children Network to support and further develop the *Raising Healthy Minds app*, which aims to improve the mental health literacy of Australian parents and carers to identify signs of social or emotional problems in their children.

### **Why is this important?**

Almost one in four Australians experience some form of mental ill health in any given year, while almost one in two Australians will experience mental ill health in their lifetime.

Mental illness significantly increases the risk of suicide, the leading cause of death of people aged 15–44.

The personal toll on the lives of individuals, their families and carers is immense, and it also has a profound effect on our society, health and social systems, and economy.

Prevention and early intervention programs and services are an effective way to keep more Australians mentally well, and to ensure those experiencing the early stages of mental ill-health can access support tailored to their needs.

Our Government is investing in digital services, youth programs and infrastructure to increase access to services for people with limited access to face-to-face services, including those in regional and remote areas.

Telephone counselling services and apps deliver low-cost prevention, early intervention, and treatment to large numbers of people.

### **Who will benefit?**

These investments will benefit all Australians to help them proactively manage their mental health and to link them with early intervention services if required.

These measures will particularly benefit children and young people experiencing mental health challenges and their families and carers; mental health service providers; state and territory governments; schools and teachers; Primary Health Networks (PHNs); lead agencies; and health professionals.

### **How much will this cost?**

The Australian Government is investing \$86.2 million over five years, from 2021–22 to 2025–26.