

# THE MILLION MINDS MISSION



Australian Government

The Million Minds Mission will assist an additional one million people who might not otherwise benefit from mental health research and trials to be part of new approaches to prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment and recovery developed from the work of the Mission.

The Mission will provide \$125 million under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to support innovative, participatory, and intervention focused research into the causes of mental illness, and the best early intervention, prevention and treatment strategies. Contributions from philanthropic organisations, other governments, industry, and the private sector will be sought to increase the reach of the fund.

The Mission will concentrate research efforts into areas of critical importance to national mental health and wellbeing, and those not already targeted through existing initiatives. It will ensure that mental health research is translated into practice – enabling science and services to work together towards interventions and treatments that will reduce the prevalence of mental illness and prevent suicide, improve care, and reduce mortality associated with mental illness in Australia.

Research is essential for improving knowledge of the causal and contributing factors to mental illness, and particularly the effective prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of these issues.

This commitment will complement existing mental health research initiatives, extend Government support for the 5th National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, and ensure all Australians have access to the best possible mental health care.

## Guiding Investment Principles

- All Australians, irrespective of background, circumstances, or geography, should have access to evidence-based, best-practice mental health and suicide prevention, treatment, and care.
- The focus of this Mission will be on research into interventions that are innovative and have the ability to transform current prevention and treatment without duplicating the efforts of existing initiatives.
- Research that acknowledges, and aims to understand, co-morbidities is important for delivering better care for those with mental illness and at risk of suicide.
- Research should directly involve members of the community and be translational in nature.
- Consumers, carers, and individuals with lived experience are partners and should be engaged throughout the research lifecycle. Genuine co-design and participatory opportunities to help guide research should be encouraged.
- Domestic and international collaboration should be encouraged and facilitated where possible.
- Enhancing mental health research relies on increasing the capacity and resources of the sector, and on improving alignment of research with the needs of consumers and clinicians.



## THE NEED FOR MORE RESEARCH

The impact of mental illness is considerable and continues to grow. Mental illness is the leading cause of both disability and premature death in Australia. Almost one in two Australians over age 16 will experience a mental health condition at some point in their lives, and suicide is ranked as the 15th leading cause of death. Mental illness and suicide have a profound effect on individuals and the community.

Research into the causes of mental illness, and prevention, early intervention, and treatment strategies is critical for reducing their prevalence and impact. The Million Minds Mission will support this essential research and develop greater capacity in the field, enabling Australia to deliver effective targeted solutions.

## MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND

The MRFF demonstrates the Government's commitment to health, medical research, and innovation. It provides a long-term, sustainable source of funding for endeavours that seek to improve health outcomes, quality of life, and health system sustainability. The MRFF provides a dedicated means of supporting targeted research in areas of key national priority.

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## Investment Priorities

### THE ORIGINS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Understanding of the causes of and contributory factors to mental illness and suicide across the lifespan is a key part of the development of new approaches to prevention, detection, diagnosis, early and successful intervention and treatment. The Mission will stimulate research into interventions through the lens of which the biological, genetic, environmental, and social causes of mental illness and associated co-morbidities may be better understood.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MENTAL HEALTH

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience higher levels of certain mental illnesses and higher rates of suicide deaths than other Australians. The Mission will fund research into more effective approaches that are tailored to the specific needs of these communities, respect the agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and are delivered in culturally safe ways.

### CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

More than three quarters of mental health problems begin before the age of 25, and have a lifelong impact. Development of effective solutions for children and youth will yield the greatest lifelong benefits to individuals and communities. The Mission will support participatory mental health research into prevention and wellness, early intervention and treatment strategies for children, youth and emerging adults.

### CRITICAL AND EMERGING PRIORITIES

Some conditions affect certain cohorts of individuals disproportionately, are particularly prevalent, or are generally poorly understood. The Mission will provide responsive support to address key areas of need in all life stages. **The initial focus under this priority will be eating disorders.**

### RESEARCH CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

The Mission will support Australia's capacity for world-leading research by cultivating the workforce and providing additional resources required to further strengthen the sector. This will include:

- The creation and better use of data sets, registries and models
- Establishing Clinical Trials Networks to facilitate greater collaboration
- Awarding early and mid-career fellowships
- Fostering the development of new centres of collaboration and research excellence
- Supporting priority initiatives to encourage domestic and international collaboration, including attracting international talent.

Research targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and growing Australia's research capacity and resources will be encouraged throughout the Mission, and across its priority areas.

## Implementation Roadmap

#### PHASE 1

An Advisory Panel will be established to assist the development of program guidelines to ensure appropriate and transparent review and funding of proposals; provide recommendations on the investment priorities; leverage co-investment; and contribute to assessing the progress of the Mission.

#### PHASE 2

A call for proposals will be issued. The priorities of the first tranche of funding will include:

- Child and youth mental health
- Eating disorders
- Mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Funding will be provided to ensure that the sector has the research resources and capacity to deliver on the Mission's aims. All proposals will be reviewed and assessed in keeping with the MRFF Funding Principles to ensure investment in research excellence.

#### PHASE 3

The investment priorities will be reviewed by the Advisory Panel to ensure alignment with other initiatives. The Mission will continue to target critical and emerging priorities. Further calls for proposals will be issued on a rotating basis to ensure a predictable stream of research funding opportunities.