

The Liberals' Mental Health Policy

*Providing responsive, respectful and supportive
services for people experiencing mental health,
alcohol and other drug problems*

MAKING DECISIONS
GETTING THINGS DONE
SECURING WA'S FUTURE



Policy Summary

The Liberals recognise that mental illness and drug and alcohol problems are some of the biggest health issues affecting Western Australians. These issues have broad-reaching effects on family members, carers and the wider community.

One-in-five Western Australians will experience a mental health problem in any one year, with almost half the population experiencing a mental health problem at least once in their lifetime.

Harmful alcohol use costs Western Australia about \$3.1 billion every year. The cost is in terms of crime, deaths and serious injuries on our roads, loss of life, insurance premiums, demand on emergency services, waiting times in hospitals and damage to private and public property.

Under the Liberal-led Government, there has been significant reform of the mental health system. This includes the appointment of the State's first Minister for Mental Health and establishing Australia's first Mental Health Commission. Over the past four years, the Liberal-led Government's comprehensive focus on mental health has seen an increase of 39.2 per cent in mental health spending.

Total expenditure on mental health and drug and alcohol services is budgeted at \$655.2 million in 2012-13. This unprecedented level of funding is the largest investment in mental health and drug and alcohol services in Western Australia's history.

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue to focus on a whole-of-government response to address the significant social and economic impacts of mental health and alcohol and other drug problems in Western Australia and will:

- Develop two new sub-acute facilities in Karratha and Bunbury, in addition the four already under development around Western Australia
- Introduce a Mental Health Bill 2013 into Parliament as a priority
- Conduct a further review of the *Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996* as committed to by the Attorney General in January 2013. The review will commence shortly and will involve the production of a discussion paper by the Department of the Attorney General which will be released for full public consultation
- Oversee the development of a comprehensive 10-year Mental Health Services Plan as recommended in the Stokes Review
- Continue to implement the state-wide suicide prevention strategy
- Conduct a pilot expansion of the Drug Court to a Drug and Alcohol Court
- Establish Western Australia's first Early Psychosis Youth Centre (EPYC)



- Establish eight beds in the New Children's Hospital to cater for children and adolescents with eating disorders
- Invest \$57.2million to appoint a further 155 FTE school nurses to address the health needs of school-aged children
- Commence operation of the Mental Health Court Diversion pilot program and employ specialist mental health clinicians in the Perth Children's Court, to provide quick assessments, reports, liaison and treatment for children with mental health issues
- Build a Dual Purpose Centre in Carnarvon to provide day time counselling and prevention services with an overnight sobering up service.





Transitional Support

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Allocate \$6.2million to establish two new sub-acute facilities in Karratha and Bunbury, in addition to the existing four facilities being developed in Joondalup, Rockingham, Broome and the Goldfields.

Sub-acute mental health facilities for people with mental illness are a safe place at which to stay with 24/7 supervision if they are at risk of hospitalisation or a safe place transition back into the community after acute care. They provide 'step down' and 'step up' services.

'Step-down' services work where a person no longer requires acute inpatient care, but has a need for additional supports that will assist them to re-establish themselves in the community.

'Step-up' services provide additional support for a person to manage a change in their mental health, but where an admission to an acute inpatient facility is not warranted.

The Liberal-led Government is already establishing four sub-acute (step-up/step-down) care facilities throughout Western Australia, with a combined capacity of up to 56 individual units. These facilities will be based in Joondalup, Rockingham, Broome and the Goldfields. The first facility in Joondalup (22 beds) was opened on January 31, 2013 and it is anticipated that the service will start operation by March 2013.

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue its commitment to support people with a mental illness by allocating \$6.2million to develop two further sub-acute facilities in Karratha and Bunbury. Work will commence on these facilities in 2013-14, with a total of \$2.8million per annum to provide on-site services.

The six-bed facility operating out of Karratha will be able to provide support services for up to 156 individuals per annum in their community. The 10-bed facility in Bunbury will be able to support up to 260 individuals a year. Not only will these two facilities allow people to seek earlier supported discharge from hospital, they will allow them to stay in their community to access local supports and services.

A New Mental Health System

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Maintain the prominence of mental health reform in Western Australia, by retaining a separate portfolio, Minister for Mental Health, and a Mental Health Commission
- Introduce a Mental Health Bill 2013 into Parliament as a priority, following feedback being provided on the current Green Bill
- Oversee the development of a comprehensive 10-year Mental Health Services Plan as recommended in Professor Stokes' report – Review of the admission or referral to and the discharge and transfer practices of public mental health facilities/services in Western Australia (Stokes Report).

By appointing the State's first Minister for Mental Health and establishing Australia's first Mental Health Commission, the Liberal-led Government has signalled a strong commitment to mental health reform.

A re-elected Liberal Government will retain these roles and progress key reforms, such as modern legislation and a 10-year plan for the sector. Together, these structures and committed reform agenda will deliver new mental health system for Western Australia.

A re-elected Liberal Government will progress new mental health legislation as a priority, to ensure the rights of people experiencing mental illness are enshrined in legislation. This legislation will be finalised in line with feedback currently being received in relation to the Mental Health Green Bill, tabled in November 2012, with a key focus on the recognition of carers, families and guardians, including access to information and involvement in discharge planning.

The need for reform of discharge planning in the Western Australian mental health services is highlighted in the Stokes Report, released in November 2012. The Liberal-led Government has already undertaken action to ensure that many recommendations are being addressed. It has also established an Implementation Partnership Group, chaired by the Chair of the Mental Health Advisory Council, Barry MacKinnon AM, to oversee this process.

A re-elected Liberal Government will ensure the development of a comprehensive 10-year Mental Health Services Plan as recommended in the Stokes Report. This plan, together with the strategic plan for mental health in Western Australia (*Mental Health 2020: Making it personal and everybody's*



business) will provide Government with a blueprint for future state-wide service development.



Young People Experiencing Mental Illness

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Establish Western Australia's first Early Psychosis Youth Centre (EPYC), to assist up to 600 young people per year by intervening early in the development of psychosis and mental illness, with a view to securing Commonwealth funding for additional facilities
- Establish eight beds in the New Children's Hospital to cater for children and adolescents with eating disorders
- Invest \$57.2million to appoint a further 155 FTE school nurses to address the needs of school-aged children.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to developing mental health problems, with 75 per cent of all severe mental illness beginning before the age of 24 years. Mental illness also accounts for about 50 per cent of the disease burden among young people aged 12 to 25.

The Liberal-led Government has allocated \$15.3million over three years towards an Early Psychosis Youth Centre (EPYC). The EPYC is the first centre of its kind in Western Australia and will provide services to intervene early in the development of psychosis and mental illness and offer support to ensure young people stay out of hospital.

A re-elected Liberal Government will negotiate with the Federal Government with a view to establishing additional EPYCs to provide services in metropolitan and regional areas.

There are currently no specialised beds in Princess Margaret Hospital for children and adolescents with eating disorders. These patients instead, have to be admitted into general wards. A re-elected Liberal Government will allocate eight beds in the New Children's Hospital to cater for children and adolescents with eating disorders

School health nurses play an important role in addressing the health needs of school-aged children. A re-elected Liberal Government will invest \$57.2million to appoint a further 155 FTE school nurses. School nurses provide ongoing support through school years for children who need it. In older children and adolescents, school nurses often provide assistance to those experiencing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and body and weight issues.

Suicide Prevention

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Continue to implement the state-wide suicide prevention strategy, aimed at increasing community awareness about suicide, including ways to recognise, support and prevent suicide among people who are at risk
- Continue the development and implementation of Community Action Plans and agency plans under the Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Provide funding of \$500,000 to Lifeline on a recurrent basis to provide crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support services.

Each year in Western Australia, an average of 260 people die from suicide and an even greater number harm themselves in suicide attempts. The Liberal-led Government has been working with communities across the State to promote education surrounding suicide, reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking behaviour.

In 2009, the Liberal-led Government allocated \$13million over four years to implement Western Australia's first Suicide Prevention Strategy. As at January 2013, a total of 40 Community Action Plans had been developed covering 251 locations and seven state-wide plans, with 84 agency pledges and 162 organisations formally committing to increasing awareness and understanding of suicide prevention. These plans encompass the metropolitan area and various regional areas, ranging from the Kimberly to Albany.

To date, the Suicide Prevention Strategy has placed a particular emphasis on addressing the needs of young people, young men, Aboriginal people and people who live in rural and regional Western Australia.

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue to implement this strategy to ensure the continued development and implementation of new suicide prevention programs.

Justice

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Commence operation of the Mental Health Court Diversion pilot program in the Perth Magistrates Court, to provide better outcomes for people experiencing mental health problems within the criminal justice system
- Employ specialist clinicians in the Children's Court, to provide quick assessments, reports, liaison and treatment for children with mental health issues
- Implement new Mental Health legislation which provides an alternative approach to transporting people with a mental illness between hospitals that does not involve uniformed police and police vehicles.

Many people associate mental illness with offending and criminal behaviour. In order to address these issues, the Liberal-led Government has already undertaken significant work to de-stigmatise and decriminalise mental illness.

The Liberal-led Government has funded Western Australia's first Mental Health Court Diversion Program, with \$5million allocated over two years in the 2012-13 State Budget. Headed by a full-time magistrate, the program aims to reduce re-offending by people with moderate or severe mental illness and diverting them away from prison.

Mental health experts will also be placed in the Perth Children's Court under a \$1.7million, 18-month pilot program to provide early intervention, timely assessments, referrals and treatment.

Under the *Mental Health Act 1996*, WA Police is the only body authorised to undertake involuntary patient transport. The Mental Health Green Bill 2012 enables other prescribed persons to transport patients. Funding of \$16.5million was allocated in the 2012-13 State Budget towards new mental health legislation and reforms, which will enable the new transport service to commence, in line with the enactment of new mental health legislation.

Tackling Illicit Drug Use and Harmful Alcohol Consumption

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Conduct an 18-month pilot expansion of the Drug Court in the metropolitan area, to target individuals whose harmful alcohol use has contributed to their offending
- Build a Dual Purpose Centre in Carnarvon to provide day time counselling and prevention services with an overnight sobering up service
- Retain a strong stance against illicit drugs
- Continue to ban synthetic cannabinoids and monitor the introduction of any new harmful substances.

A Liberal-led Government is committed to reducing the impact of problems associated with alcohol and other drug use in Western Australia. Over the past four years, significant resources have been allocated to tackle illicit drug use, which affects the lives of users, their family and friends, and the wider community.

The Liberal-led Government has taken a strong stance on drugs, including:

- Overturning Labor's weak cannabis laws by introducing tougher penalties for possession and cultivation
- Acted quickly to ban new emerging synthetic cannabinoids such as Kronik
- Introducing tough new penalties for people who sell drugs to children or endanger children through the manufacture and cultivation of drugs.

Diversion programs have been proven to be effective in breaking the criminal cycle associated with illicit drug use by encouraging offenders to tackle their alcohol and other drug problems early and reduce motivation for criminal activity.

A re-elected Liberal Government will allocate \$602,500 towards an 18-month pilot expansion of the Drug Court in the metropolitan area, to target individuals whose harmful alcohol use has contributed to their offending.

A re-elected Liberal Government will also build a Dual Purpose Centre in Carnarvon. This will be the first of its kind in Western Australia and combine day time counselling and prevention services with an overnight 10-bed sobering up service.

Our Record

The Liberals in Government have a strong record in not only the delivery of mental health services but in instituting vital reform of the mental health system.

These achievements include:

- Commencing major reform to the way mental health services are managed and delivered by appointing Western Australia's first Minister for Mental Health and establishing Australia's first Mental Health Commission
- A 39.2 per cent increase in mental health funding over the first four years of the Liberal-led Government
- Development of a 10-year strategic policy, Mental Health 2020: Making it Personal and Everybody's Business, providing a whole-of-government approach to the delivery of support and services for people with mental health problems
- Appointing the State's first Mental Health Advisory Council in 2011. This independent council provides high-level, independent advice to the Mental Health Commissioner on major issues affecting mental health care
- The establishment of the WA Association of Mental Health Consumers, auspiced by Consumers of Mental Health WA with assistance from the WA Association of Mental Health and funded with \$1.25million over five years by the commission. This initiative is designed to bring together the mental health consumer voice to influence Government and public sector agencies, private organisations and the community sector
- \$13million over four years to implement the State's first Suicide Prevention Strategy, aimed at addressing the incidence of suicide and to improve the mental health and well-being of all Western Australians
- \$1.2million over four years provided to Youth Focus to increase the free counselling to young people at risk of depression or suicide
- A \$500,000 grant to Lifeline WA in 2011 for the delivery of suicide telephone crisis support. A further \$521,000 was provided in 2012
- Allocation of \$12.3million for an expanded facility at Joondalup Health Campus to deliver 42 mental health unit beds



- Funding for new step up, step down facilities in the Rockingham, Broome and the Goldfields
- Improvements to and development of specialist mental health inpatient units closer to local communities through new funds and in some cases relocation of activity, including:
 - Rockingham, 30 authorised beds, including 8 secure beds - construction completed
 - Broome, 14 authorised inpatient beds, including 2 secure beds - construction completed
 - Albany, increasing inpatient beds by an additional 7 beds to a total of 16 authorised inpatient beds, as part of the broader development of the hospital campus - due for completion in 2013. This includes 4 secure beds
 - Fiona Stanley, 30 authorised inpatient beds, including 8 designated secure beds as part of the broader development of the hospital campus - due for completion in 2014
 - New Children's Hospital, 20 authorised inpatient beds, an increase of 6 beds and including 4 secure beds, which is part of the broader development of the hospital campus due for completion in 2015
 - Midland, 56 authorised inpatient beds, an increase of 15 beds and including 16 secure beds, which is part of the broader development of the hospital campus, due for completion in 2015.
- An unprecedented focus on the needs of children and young people experiencing mental illness, with \$6.54million recurrent allocated to community mental health services for children and youth in both regional and metropolitan areas.
- \$473,700 has been allocated for an additional six mental health staff at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and \$200,000 to the Department of Education for a dedicated school psychologist. These services will work together with schools to identify children at a high risk and divert them into mental health services.