



Email media@healthaustraliaparty.com.au

Website www.healthaustraliaparty.com.au

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT MENTAL HEALTH REFORMS

HAP supports a personal recovery oriented philosophy for mental health care whereby the recovery involves choice, personal responsibility and empowerment.

Despite the inclusion of the Recovery philosophy in all mental health policy documents, the current mental health service provision is still profoundly influenced by the *biomedical* approach to disease and treatment. At the heart of the biomedical approach is the belief that mental illness is caused by brain and neurotransmitter dysfunction, and recommends pharmaceutical interventions as the first line of response, despite limited evidence for their efficacy*. This approach fails to acknowledge the many psychological, social and nutritional factors that can contribute to mental health concerns.

Appropriate management of PTSD is also of great concern to HAP and an area where immediate reforms are also required. Women who have experienced birth trauma, single parents who have experiences significant relationship issues and particularly domestic violence, and traumatised defense and emergency service workers are particularly under-supported and must be provided with more appropriate assistance to effectively deal with their trauma. We would also like to see greater support provided to mothers suffering from postnatal depression. HAP feels the current Medicare funded psych services are under resourced. The HAP would like to see reforms which encompasses natural medicine and proposes a multi-faceted approach to mental health service provision that addresses the social determinants of health, including housing, social inclusion, meaningful work, access to education, financial support, healthy food, and the management of stress. Support also needs to be directed to individuals and families in recognition of the importance of a physically and emotionally secure childhood in the prevention of mental health difficulties.

*References

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