



the Australian College
of Mental Health Nurses Inc.

Media Release

Mental health nursing gap rightly likened to hunting for unicorns

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Melissa Davey's powerful article 'Like hunting for unicorns' hits the nail on the head in identifying the many Australians who fall between the gaps of mental health care provision – these people are indeed victims of the broken middle in our mental health care systems.

Mental Health Nurses (MHNs) are willing and able to be part of the solution, yet their significant skills and capabilities are underutilised in the current system. For example, Credentialed Mental Health Nurses (CMHNs) who are credentialed by the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) and with advanced post graduate skills in psychotherapy are not able to access existing schemes like Better Access to reduce costs for consumers.

At a time when consumers report despair from the inaccessibility and unavailability of skilled mental health professionals, the omission of skilled CMHNs from the mix of health professionals offering care is unacceptable.

Most importantly, these CMHNs are highly capable and have long experience of helping those in the untreated one third of the mental health system that Melissa Davey highlighted in her article. We call on the federal and state government to start prioritising, unleashing, and securing more existing MHN resources through proper funding.

Funding access to credentialed MHNs via Better Access should be a priority for the federal government and investing heavily in the MHN workforce now and into the future will grow this underutilised resource. The current system is in crisis and urgently needs the broad diverse skills and competencies of CMHNs.

Learn more at www.acmhn.org

For further comment, please contact:

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The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) is the pre-eminent and authoritative voice of the mental health nursing profession in Australia. It provides leadership to, and advocacy for mental health issues across the mental health sector and nursing, as well as setting national standards of practice in mental health nursing.