

18 April 2019

MEDIA STATEMENT

Mental health expertise crucial to meet the mental health needs of Australians now and into the future

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) launched its election campaign today calling on all parties and candidates to commit to seven key issues to meet the predicted mental health needs of Australians now and into the future.

ACMHN CEO, Kim Ryan said, “the current mental health system lacks vision and long-term strategy which have resulted to a national investment of approximately \$9 billion per year, yet still struggling to provide better access and quality outcomes.”

The ACMHN are asking all parties and candidates to commit to the following seven key issues to:

- Develop a mental health nursing workforce strategy as a matter of urgency, including providing scholarships to support the transition of registered nurses into mental health nursing.
- Include credentialed mental health nurses/mental health nurse practitioners as Better Access providers.
- Remove barriers for mental health nurses to provide services under the NDIS.
- Adopt the recommendations of the MBS Taskforce Reviews Nurse Practitioners reference Group
- Further build on the work of the ACMHN to develop mental health nursing models of care through the primary health networks
- Work with the ACMHN to develop mental health nurse led clinics to provide access and the provision of mental health nursing services.
- Better utilise telehealth systems to enable mental health nurses to support all nurses and midwives to participate in collegial discussion for clinical decision making to benefit those for whom they provide care.

The ACMHN has an inherent responsibility and sense of urgency to ensure that the mental health nursing workforce becomes more responsive to the needs of the community and that it is sustainable, and that the broader nursing and midwifery workforce are supported to develop mental health knowledge and clinical skills.

The College wants to see a mental health and health system which provides all people with quality care but it is not achievable without a properly supported nurse workforce.

All political parties and candidates need to act urgently in the public interest to address Australia’s long-term piecemeal approach to mental health.

END

Available for interview – Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan

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