

FOREWORD

The whole-of-government approach underpinning the Fourth National Mental Health Plan (the Fourth Plan) recognises that the goal of achieving good mental health for Australians is not only the domain of clinical mental health services. Engaging with a range of sectors from across portfolios and the broader community is essential for promoting mental health and wellbeing, and assisting recovery for people who do experience mental illness. Significant increases in funding have been injected into the mental health sector, and appropriately, there is a high-level of public scrutiny on the performance of mental health services, and the outcomes for people with mental illness, their carers and families.

The Fourth Plan commits governments to a range of activities and actions that continue the progression of reform for the mental health sector. The role of the Fourth National Mental Health Plan Measurement Strategy (the Measurement Strategy) is to inform the public of the indicators and targets set for measuring governments' performance in relation to the activities and actions identified in the Fourth Plan to continue the progression of mental health sector reform.

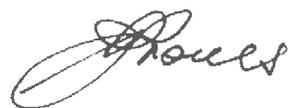
The Fourth Plan has identified two distinct levels of focus for performance measurement. Firstly, the policy level, with a set of 25 indicators identified to measure the performance of governments in progressing reform, and an associated commitment to publicly report results against those indicators. This Plan also commits governments to developing appropriate targets that articulate desirable levels of performance. Secondly, the Fourth Plan commits to building on the work achieved under previous national mental health plans to improve service delivery level performance information, through further development of the National Mental Health

Performance and Benchmarking Framework, and publicly reporting service-level performance.

The key purpose of this first edition of the Measurement Strategy is to describe the underlying principles and the approach taken in developing the technical details of the indicators and targets. Future data development activity will be articulated in the Mental Health Information Development Priorities Third Edition, and interpretative analysis and commentary in relation to reform progress will be provided with the published indicators via the National Mental Health Report.

It is worth noting that identification of performance indicators to measure change and outcomes is only the first step in monitoring mental health reform. The experience from previous national mental health plans is that there is significant work, and cost, to be undertaken to develop national data sources to the point that they can supply contemporary, timely data to populate identified performance indicators.

My sincere thanks to the numerous organisations and individuals who contributed to the development of the Measurement Strategy. I look forward to your continued support as we work cooperatively to improve the mental health of Australians.



Dr Aaron Groves.

Chair.

Mental Health Standing Committee.

Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council.

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