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## MHCA welcomes National Report Card

The Mental Health Council of Australia has welcomed the release of Australia's first National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

The National Report Card draws heavily on existing information and data along with the direct experiences of those who use mental health services every day, and those who care for them.

"The National Report Card gives us a snapshot of where Australia currently is and takes a whole-of-life approach, looking at physical health, employment, relationships, education, housing and homelessness, community participation, family and child support and justice. This shows us that we've come a long way over the last 20 or so years, but we still have a long way to go", said Mr Frank Quinlan, CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia.

"The Commissioners are to be congratulated on drawing together such a diverse range of information, and for giving life to the experience of mental health consumers and carers", said Mr Quinlan.

"However, we need to build on the recommendations from this National Report Card. This document can't turn into another false dawn, where there is a lot of talk but very little action. It's time for us to agree to national targets for mental health and to achieve them", Mr Quinlan said.

"The National Report Card shows that in spite of welcome investments by various individual governments, people who live with mental illness are too often let down by the system", said Mr Quinlan.

"The Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed in 2011 to make mental health a priority. Today's first National Report Card provides them with all they need to set meaningful and measurable targets for a contributing life for those with mental illness. It's time to get on with the job", Mr Quinlan said.

"How long do we expect people to wait for essential clinical and community based mental health services?

How long will we tolerate people who experience mental illness dying earlier than the rest of the population?

How long do we expect people who experience mental illness to wait for stable and secure accommodation?

How many people who experience mental illness do we intend to engage in meaningful employment?

COAG must answer these questions and commit to real targets if we are going to have a society in which those with mental illness can expect to live a meaningful and contributing life", said Mr Quinlan.

"The decision of the Gillard Government to establish the National Mental Health Commission has been vindicated by this first National Report Card", Mr Quinlan said, "Let's see that their work in preparing the National Report Card isn't wasted".

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