



MEDIA RELEASE

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Pat McGorry is right – Mental health will define the Gillard Government

Australian of the Year, Pat McGorry, is right in saying that mental health reform is a defining policy area for the Gillard Government.

Speaking on ABC *Lateline*, Professor McGorry stated what most of the mental health sector believe: "The time for talk is definitely over - the time for talk was over some time ago, and what we need to see is not more of the same."

"What the Government has to do is commit to ending the inequity between physical health care and mental health care in this country."

Professor McGorry went on to say, "There are several big missing elements in 21st Century mental health care in Australia; the first being the focus on early intervention in teenagers and young adults, as evidenced by the Headspace and EPPIC models, which are top of the list of the Health and Hospitals Reform Commission's recommendations."

Improving community mental health services for those let down by de-institutionalism is another key reform called for by Professor McGorry.

Australia's leading advocate for mental health reform restated the problem – that mental health in Australia constitutes 14 per cent of the health burden, yet it attracts just six per cent of the health funding.

In June 2009, Kevin Rudd launched *A Healthier Future for all Australians*, the final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission. This landmark report called for major investment in mental health and detailed 12 recommendations desperately needed to reform mental healthcare in Australia.

Professor McGorry noted that the call for major reform has "the support of 61 organisations around the mental health sector There's tremendous unity and cohesion in the sector, which I've never seen before. There's tremendous support from the Australian community. The survey published in *The Australian* last week showed that 35 per cent of Australians rate mental health as one of the top three issues, along with climate change and the economy, compared with 10 per cent of people in the US and in Europe."

As the Australian of the Year so rightly said, "Australians get it. The public are onto this. It's the Government that really needs to get with the program here."

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