

**Australian Government Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Progress Report on Implementation of the COAG National Action Plan on Mental Health**

PROGRESS ON INITIATIVES SINCE LAST REPORT

FaHCSIA recently conducted a strategic evaluation of the three community COAG Mental Health Measures to appropriately address the changing context of community mental health and their role in the broader context of mental health service delivery. The evaluation commenced in June 2009 and the final report was received by the Department in March 2010. The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, is currently considering this report.

FaHCSIA engaged Courage Partners from the Department's *Social Policy and Research Panel* to conduct the evaluation. The consultant undertook site visits with selected service providers across all three service streams and in all states and territories. They also consulted with key stakeholders including state and territory governments, peak bodies and service recipients (people with mental illness, carers and their families).

NACMH was represented on the Mental Health Evaluation Advisory Committee that provided advice on the findings of the evaluation and monitored progress of the evaluation. The Evaluation Advisory Committee met three times during the course of the evaluation (August 2009, December 2009 and March 2010) followed by a final teleconference in March 2010.

As at 30 April 2010 a total 10,664 participants have been assisted since April 2007. There are now 175 PHaMs sites operating or close to operating (97 metro, 68 non metro sites and 10 remote sites) across Australia. Of the participants who have or are receiving service 13% identify as CALD and 8% as Indigenous.

PHaMs brochures are available in 13 different languages and are available on FaHCSIA's website. Information about PHaMs, including the location of successful providers, can be located through the FaHCSIA's website at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/mentalhealth/progserv/PersonalHelpersMentorsProgram/Pages/default.aspx>

PHaMs Round 4 – Part B – vulnerable groups

PHaMs Round Four funding targets vulnerable people with mental illness who are humanitarian entrants, the Stolen Generation or homeless. Participants are required to be 16 years or older unless they reside in a remote community where there is no age restriction.

Existing Sites

17 Existing PHaMs sites that were at or near capacity and had high numbers of identified vulnerable groups were provided with additional funding totalling approximately \$7.4 million until 30 June 2012 to engage staff to provide services to the identified vulnerable groups of homeless, humanitarian or Indigenous.

New Sites

10 new mainstream sites have been funded under PHaMs round four as well as six new remote service model sites. Services for a seventh remote site are still under negotiation.

New Mainstream PHaMs Services

State	Site	Metro/Non Metro
NSW	Greater Newcastle	Metro
	Bankstown, Canada Bay, Ashfield and Leichhardt	Metro
	Fairfield – Liverpool	Metro
QLD	Toowoomba	Non-metro
SA	Riverland	Non-metro
	Adelaide – Enfield/Blair Athol (inner Northern Metro)	Metro
TAS	Greater Hobart	Metro
VIC	Mildura (Loddon-Mallee Region)	Non-metro
	Greater Dandenong	Metro
WA	Bunbury, Vasse	Non-metro

New Remote Service Model Services

State	Site	Metro/Non Metro
NT	Tennant Creek and Elliott	Remote
	Papunya - West Alice Springs region (under negotiation)	Remote
QLD	Aurukun	Remote
	Doomadgee (including Mornington Island)	Remote
	Yarrabah	Remote
WA	Narrogin (including Katanning)	Remote
	Warburton	Remote

The Mental Health Respite initiative has provided assistance to over 21,000 carers and family of people with severe mental illness and intellectual disability from April 2007 to 31 December 2009.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (Centres) broker respite for carers of people with mental illness and carers of people with intellectual disability, including Autism. Of the 7,000 carers assisted through Centres around 13% identified as CALD and 5% identified as Indigenous.

FaHCSIA also funds 134 service providers around Australia that deliver respite and support to carers and their families as well as education programs for family and friends of people with a

mental illness. Over 14,000 carers and families have been assisted by these services with 9% identifying as CALD and 7% identifying as Indigenous.

The list of providers can be located at FaHCSIA website at http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/mentalhealth/funding/Pages/mhnrdf_rd_2.aspx

As at 31 December 2009 Mental Health Community Based (MHCB) provided assistance to approximately 30,788 people 26% identifying as CALD and 13% as Indigenous.

FaHCSIA funds 45 non-government organizations to deliver a range of activities and services that support families, carers, children and young people coping with mental illness. These services include but are not limited to: coping skills courses/workshops, parenting skills courses, resources and advice, support networks, recreation programs, mentoring programs, community engagement programs and Community Mental Health Awareness Program, targeting local communities including specific CALD and Indigenous communities. Around 9,000 participants have had individual assistance.

Around 21,000 participants have been assisted through group activities such as the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) carer workshops, family counselling and other resource building services.

MHCA plan to conduct annual surveys of carer experiences to monitor progress against the issues identified by carers.

The Government announced on 25 November 2009 that it was introducing a new, non-discriminatory model of income management to replace the scheme now operating in prescribed areas of the Northern Territory (NT).

Subject to the passage of legislation, this model will commence from July 2010, and will initially cover the whole of the NT. It is expected that most people will have been transitioned from the old scheme to the new scheme by 31 December 2010.

The operation of new income management will be carefully evaluated; with the first progress report is expected in 2011-12.

Other income management trials currently underway in Western Australia and Queensland will also continue to be evaluated. Future implementation elsewhere in Australia will be informed by the evidence gained from this evaluation activity.

Who is covered?

Under the Government's proposal, people will be subject to income management under this model if they are:

- **disengaged youth:** aged 15 to 24 years and have been in receipt of one of the following payments for at least 13 out of the last 26 weeks:
 - Youth Allowance;
 - Newstart Allowance;
 - Special Benefit;
 - Parenting Payment;
- **long-term welfare recipient:** aged 25 and above (and younger than Age Pension age) and have been in receipt of one of the following payments for at least 52 out of the past 104 weeks:
 - Youth Allowance;

- NewStart Allowance;
- Special Benefit;
- Parenting Payment;
- **referred** for income management by **child protection authorities**; or
- **assessed by Centrelink** social workers as requiring income management for reasons including vulnerability to financial crisis, domestic violence or economic abuse.

People not currently subject to income management, who will be covered under the new scheme, will be contacted by Centrelink.

Exemptions from income management

People subject to income management under the disengaged youth and long-term welfare recipient categories will be able to seek an exemption from income management if they meet certain criteria, that vary according to circumstances.

- For people with school-aged children, the criteria will relate to adequate school attendance, or satisfactory progress at a schooling alternative.
- For people with dependent children younger than school age, the criteria will relate to responsible parenting – for example, a record of up-to-date immunisation, and attendance at child care or parenting classes.
- For people without children, the exemption criteria will relate to engagement through work or study or other approved activities.

Voluntary income management

Voluntary income management will become available in the NT when the new scheme is rolled out. For people who volunteer, there will be an incentive payment of \$250 for each 6 months of income management completed.

Money management and financial counselling support services

Money management and financial counselling support services will help people who are income managed and others in the community to develop the skills to appropriately use their income support payments. It is not compulsory for people to go to one of these services, but it is encouraged because they provide a range of support that can help people avoid or resolve financial difficulties and put in place good ways to manage their money. Services are delivered by community organisations and include crisis support, financial counselling, advocacy and budgeting and money management education.

Matched Savings Payment

Customers subject to compulsory income management who complete an approved money management course and demonstrate a personal savings pattern may be eligible to claim a Matched Savings Payment. This payment will be up to \$500 (or 50 per cent of the cost of the item, whichever is less). Customers may only claim the payment once.

Rates of income management

People referred for income management by child protection authorities will have 70 per cent of their regular instalment payments income managed. All other income managed customers will have 50 per cent of regular instalment payments income managed. For all customers, 100 per cent of advance payments, lump sum payments, and Baby Bonus installments will be income managed.

Accessing income managed funds

The methods of accessing income managed funds will not change. For many people, the most convenient way to access their income management funds will be through the BasicsCard, a PIN protected card which operates using the existing EFTPOS network, and can be used at a broad range of merchants. However, there is a range of other ways to access income managed funds – Centrelink will discuss these with customers at their initial income management interview.

Trigger payments for income management

The trigger payments for income management for each category are listed below.

Disengaged youth ('under 25s')

- Youth Allowance;
- Newstart Allowance;
- Special Benefit;
- Parenting Payment (Single);
- Parenting Payment (Partnered).

Long-term welfare payment recipient ('over 25s')

- Youth Allowance;
- Newstart Allowance;
- Special Benefit;
- Parenting Payment (Single);
- Parenting Payment (Partnered).

Child Protection and social worker referral

- Youth Allowance;
- Newstart Allowance;
- Parenting Payment (Partnered);
- Parenting Payment (Single);
- Sickness Allowance;
- Special Benefit;
- Partner Allowance;
- Austudy Payment;
- Mature Age Allowance;
- Parenting Allowance;
- Widow Allowance;
- Widow B Pension;
- ABSTUDY that includes an amount identified as Living Allowance;
- Age Pension;
- Disability Support Pension;
- Wife Pension;
- Carer Payment;
- Bereavement Allowance;
- Special Needs Pension;
- DVA Service Pension or Income Support Supplement;
- Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA).

Payments subject to income management

Once a person is subject to income management, the following payments will be subject to income management:

- All trigger payments listed above;
- Family Tax Benefit;
- Baby Bonus;
- Maternity Immunisation Allowance;
- Carer Allowance;
- Child Disability Allowance;
- Mobility Allowance;
- Pensioner Education Supplement;
- Double Orphan Pension;
- Social Security and DVA Telephone Allowance;
- Utilities Allowance;
- a payment under the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme relating to Homelands Learning Centre students;

- ABSTUDY that includes an amount identified as Pensioner Education Supplement;
- Social Security and DVA Bereavement Payment;
- NT CDEP transition Payment;
- Advance payments of most social security benefits, pensions and allowances, and some DVA service or income support payments and supplements.

Further information

A copy of the Minister's press release can be found at

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/welfare_reforms_protect_children_25nov2009.htm.

More information about the Government's reasons for introducing this new model can be found at

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/nter_reports/policy_statement_nter/Pages/default.aspx.