

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

6.9 The committee recommends the development of a national rural and remote mental health strategy which seeks to address the low rates of access to services, workforce shortage, the high rate of suicide, cultural realities, language barriers and the social determinants of mental health in rural and remote communities.

Recommendation 2

6.10 The committee recommends that the national rural and remote mental health strategy is subject to an implementation and monitoring framework which includes regular reporting to government and that these reports are tabled in Parliament.

Recommendation 3

6.17 The committee recommends an overarching approach is taken by all parties to guarantee that the design of mental health and wellbeing services starts with local community input to ensure that all rural and remote mental health services meet the measure of 'the right care in the right place at the right time'. This needs to be informed by best practice and international knowledge.

Recommendation 4

6.22 The committee recommends that the National Disability Insurance Agency ensure that the implementation of the psychosocial disability stream takes into account the issues facing rural and remote communities, including barriers to accessing mental health services and the lack of knowledge and experience in both psychosocial disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Recommendation 5

6.27 The committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should develop longer minimum contract lengths for commissioned mental health services in regional, rural and remote locations.

Recommendation 6

6.29 The committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should develop policies to allow mental health service contracts to be extended where a service provider can demonstrate the efficacy and suitability of the services provided, and a genuine connection to the local community.

Recommendation 7

6.34 The committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments consider the reestablishment of block funding for mental health services and service providers in regional, rural, and remote areas.

Recommendation 8

6.37 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government review the role of Primary Health Networks in commissioning mental health services under the stepped care model to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery in regional, rural and remote areas.

Recommendation 9

6.42 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government consider pathways for allied health professionals and nurses in rural and remote Australia to refer patients under the *Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the MBS* (Better Access) initiative.

Recommendation 10

6.45 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government prioritise the development of implementation and evaluation plans for the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023*.

Recommendation 11

6.51 The committee recommends the Commonwealth Government implement measures to ensure that services commissioned by Primary Health Networks embody the action plans of the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023* and are delivered by, or in genuine long-term partnerships with, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations.

Recommendation 12

6.52 The committee recommends that all Primary Health Networks have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member on their board.

Recommendation 13

6.57 The committee recommends the Commonwealth Minister for Health work with health professional colleges to develop strategies for the immediate improvement of professional supports and clinical supervision for registered health practitioners working in rural and remote locations.

Recommendation 14

6.63 The committee recommends that all mental health service providers, including government and community sector, ensure their workforces are culturally competent and that such training be endorsed by and delivered in partnership with the communities into which they are embedded.

Recommendation 15

6.66 The committee recommends that all providers of fly-in, fly-out mental health services ensure that mental health professionals are supported by long-term investment to enable them to provide reliable and regular support services to rural and remote communities, with consistency of personnel an essential requirement for any service provider.

Recommendation 16

6.69 The committee recommends that peer support workers be given appropriate training to enable them to continue their role in helping people experiencing mental health issues. The committee further considers that peer support workers should be recognised as a valuable support service by being paid to perform this role in rural and remote communities.

Recommendation 17

6.77 The committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, as well as mental health service providers and local communities, continue to educate rural and remote communities about mental health and advertise local and digitally-available support services, with a view to reducing the associated stigma.

Recommendation 18

6.78 The committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments work with mental health service providers and local communities to co-design appropriate educational materials to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health in rural and remote communities.

