

Mental health reform must start with people, not bureaucracy

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Chief Executive of the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association Limited, Tony Farley, said the Productivity Commission's interim report of its review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention was a 'critical wake-up call' for the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

'Maintaining the status quo while expecting different outcomes reflects a system stuck in its ways, holding back progress and damaging trust – Australians deserve better,' said Mr Farley.

'The report simply reinforces what we already know – care is inaccessible, unaffordable, and uncoordinated, with people at breaking point wherever you turn.'

Tony Farley says the first step out of this avoidable cycle of failure is for 'Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers to stop creating more committees and bureaucratic processes and put people in charge to make the reforms happen'.

'We need to see health as an investment, not just a cost. This takes time to get right, particularly in building the trust and support needed to work together, where people are seen and treated as more than just their care needs.'

'The sense of desperation and futility felt by people at the very frontline of this crisis is heartbreaking, and no amount of deflection or justification is going to make these findings palatable.'

'We cannot continue with the "it's too hard" approach to mental health and suicide prevention. What's needed now is leadership, accountability, and a genuine commitment to doing things differently, because lives and livelihoods are at stake.'

'This is the Government's second term and the perfect time to take the lead and build on the work of reformers before them.'

'Sitting on our hands is a tragedy we can't let happen.'

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association Limited (AHHA Ltd) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.

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