



FaCSIA Mental Health Update

January – February 2007

The Mental Health Branch was established to implement a range of new non-clinical mental health initiatives announced in the 2006-07 Federal Budget. These measures are \$45.2 million over five years for community based programmes; \$284.8 million over five years for personal helpers and mentors; and \$224.7 million over five years for respite care.

This is the first of a series of brief updates on the progress of the implementation.

Community Based Programmes

Following the national consultations in September 2006, the Community Based Programmes team has been focussed on detailed programme design issues. This has involved research and liaison with other program areas to avoid overlap and duplication, and to fine tune the guidelines and objectives. It is expected that an open, competitive grants process will be initiated in the first half of 2007 to seek proposals for projects to assist families and carers who support people with a mental illness.

Personal Helpers and Mentors

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Programme aims to create opportunities for recovery for people with a severe functional limitation resulting from a mental illness by helping them to overcome social isolation and increase their connections to their community. Following nominations from each of the COAG State and Territory Mental Health Implementation Groups on the location of the demonstration sites, the programme will be operational from May 2007 and delivered through the non-government sector. The demonstration sites will be located in metropolitan, rural, regional and remote areas. An open competitive selection process for the demonstration sites will commence shortly.

Respite Care

The Mental Health Branch undertook broad reaching public consultations in the early design stages in September 2006. Key findings from these consultations in relation to respite have influenced the design features of this programme. The Mental Health Respite Programme is being designed to

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allow the delivery of a variety of flexible respite options which can be tailored and/or created to meet the individual needs of the carer, the person they are caring for and their families. Implementation is expected to commence as planned in April 2007.

www.facsia.gov.au/mentalhealth

email - mentalhealth@facsia.gov.au