

# **WORLD CLASS YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

**Build a youth mental healthcare system that helps young people get the services they need when they need them**

The Greens will help young people get the right mental health services. We will focus on early intervention and prevention and investing in tailored services that we know work. We need to focus on mental health at both a personal and community level and ensure adequate funding is given to all aspects of mental health in Australia.



## **THE GREENS WILL:**

- Make services **effective, transparent and accessible**
- Improve access to **online services**
- **Help young people help other young people** through peer to peer services
- Improve **services for young people** in crisis
- **Support young people** in the workplace
- **Reduce mental health stigma**

## EFFECTIVE, ACCESSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In Australia, approximately one in four young people have a mental health condition.<sup>1</sup> Of those who develop a mental health condition in their lifetime, 50% do so before they are 14, and 75% before they are 25.<sup>2</sup> These alarming statistics show the need for effective prevention and early intervention programs that both support and engage young people.

The Australian Greens are committed to listening to young people and ensuring that their voices are heard, as well as helping to amplify the voices of young people on issues that matter to them. We believe in services that are youth driven and developed, and that involve young people at all stages of design and delivery. As part of our funding to boost youth services, we will ensure that young people are funded to take part in designing and delivering these services.

All health services should be evaluated and funding should be provided in a transparent way. As part of our suite of broader health reforms, we will radically transform the way that health care services are governed. We will create a system that puts people above funding structures and systems. This will mean that services are more accountable, regionally responsive and ultimately more effective. We are committed to delivering well-directed government investment in the right services, particularly for young people, so that we can reduce the years lost to the trauma and despair that young people with mental ill health currently face.

## IMPROVE ACCESS TO ONLINE SERVICES

Young people often seek help for mental health issues on the internet.<sup>3</sup> Studies have shown that online mental health treatments can significantly improve symptoms for some mental illnesses, including depression and anxiety.<sup>4</sup> We also know that young people feel

comfortable using technology to get help for mental illness<sup>5</sup> and the increasing emergence of smartphones and online information has made this more accessible.

The Australian Greens will ensure that more young Australians have access to the best practice online mental health therapies. These services will, over time, interact and work effectively with face-to-face services, leading to seamless interactions between the online and face-to-face worlds.



## YOUNG PEOPLE HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE

Peer workers are people with lived experience who provide peer support to others with mental health issues. Evidence is beginning to emerge that peer work achieves positive outcomes for people by providing person-centred and recovery-oriented care. It also provides valuable opportunities for people with lived experience to be trained as mental health support workers. They can especially help young people by building a mutual relationship that fosters hope and optimism.

We want to support more young people to become peer workers, including First Nations young people.

### We will make this happen by:

- Providing 1,000 places for peer to peer workers as part of our national peer workforce trial;
- Providing opportunities for young people to train as peer workers through our free TAFE initiative, which would include free places for the nationally recognised qualification in peer work, the Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work.

1 Patel, V., Flisher, A. J., Hetrick, S., & McGorry, P. (2007). Mental Health of Young People: a Global Public Health Challenge. *The Lancet*, 369(9569), 1302–1313.

2 Ibid

3 Vogl, G., Ratnaïke, D., Ivancic, L., Rowley, A., and Chandy, V. (2016) One Click Away? Insights into Mental Health Digital Self-help by Young Australians EY and ReachOut Australia

4 Callear, A. L., Christensen, H., MacKinnon, A. J., Griffiths, K. M., & O'Kearney, R. (2009). The YouthMood Project: a Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial of an Online Cognitive Behavioural Program with Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77(6), 1021–1032; Sethi, S., Campbell, A. J., & Ellis, L. A. (2010). The Use of Computerised Self-Help Packages to Treat Adolescent Depression and Anxiety. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 28(3),

144–160; Spence, S. H., Donovan, C. L., March, S., Gamble, A., Anderson, R. E., Prosser, S., & Kenardy, J. (2011). A Randomised Controlled Trial of Online Versus Clinic-Based CBT for Adolescent Anxiety. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 79(5), 629–642.

5 Vogl, G., Ratnaïke, D., Ivancic, L., Rowley, A., and Chandy, V. (2016) One Click Away? Insights into Mental Health Digital Self-help by Young Australians EY and ReachOut Australia

## IMPROVE SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Suicide accounts for over one-third of deaths among people aged 15-24 years.<sup>6</sup> Every twelve hours, an Australian under 30 commits suicide.<sup>7</sup> The known highest risk factor of future suicide attempts is a past attempt. Support during a crisis period saves lives, and yet these services are often fragmented and difficult to access. One model which can provide the right support is community-based assertive outreach. This refers to a range of targeted supports, which can be either clinical or non-clinical, for individuals who have attempted suicide. Assertive outreach is typically delivered by community mental health services or not-for-profit providers following discharge from hospital after a suicide attempt.

### The Australian Greens will:

- Provide \$250 million over four years in grant funding for community-based assertive outreach programs targeted at children and young people<sup>8</sup>
- Improve access to face-to-face services by providing \$25 million over the next four years for a trial of 50,000 children and young adults to each access 10 group sessions of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.<sup>9</sup> The trial would fund 5,000 participants in its first year and 15,000 for the following three years.



<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) Causes of Death, Australia, cat 3303.0

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Financial implications prepared by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office are costed and current as at 2018-19 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

<sup>9</sup> Financial implications prepared by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office are costed and current as at 2018-19 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

## SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

Mental health issues can be a barrier for young people finding and maintaining employment. One way in which they can be supported to find ongoing work and studying opportunities is individual placement support programs. Currently, there are not enough places in these programs to meet the need for mental healthy support.

The Greens will expand the existing Individual Placement Support trial to cover an additional 10,000 participants at a cost of \$40 million over the next four years.<sup>10</sup> The trial currently operates at 14 sites across rural and regional Australia including Albany, Bendigo, Dubbo and Mt Isa. We will consider expanding the existing trial sites where employment is particularly difficult to find.

## REDUCE MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Mental health stigma stops people asking for help and getting the treatment and support they need. It makes it more difficult to find somewhere decent to live, to get a job, a mortgage, or insurance. It can make it more difficult to make friends, feel good, or even to feel that life is worth living. Stigma is one of the major reasons that young people don't seek help for mental ill health.<sup>11</sup>

There have been many stigma-reduction programs and campaigns in Australia and internationally over the past ten years. However, these have not always been rigorously evaluated, and people with lived experience are not always involved in their development and operation.

To create anti-stigma campaigns that are evidence based, effective and work for the benefit of the whole community, the Greens will develop and provide \$10 million in funding for a youth mental health stigma strategy.<sup>12 13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Financial implications prepared by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office are costed and current as at 2018-19 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

<sup>11</sup> Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K. M., & Christensen, H. (2010). Perceived barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking in young people: a systematic review. *BMC Psychiatry*, 10(113); OECD. (2014). Making Mental Health Count: The Social and Economic Costs of Neglecting Mental Health Care. OECD Health Policy Studies. OECD Publishing.

<sup>12</sup> A national mental health stigma strategy was recommended by SANE Australia in their 'a life without stigma' paper: [https://www.sane.org/images/PDFs/ALifeWithoutStigma\\_A\\_SANE\\_Report.pdf](https://www.sane.org/images/PDFs/ALifeWithoutStigma_A_SANE_Report.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Financial implications prepared by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office are costed and current as at 2018-19 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.