

FREE MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

Bring mental health into Medicare so everyone has access to the care and support they need, when they need it.

Before the pandemic, too many people were missing out on mental health care.

Now, following months of lockdowns, we have a mental health crisis.

The Greens will ensure everyone gets the mental health care they want and need. We will change the rebate so psychology and psychiatry providers are able to access the Medicare rebate.

Whether it's prevention and early intervention, targeted strategies to address those missing out, or addressing the social determinants of health.

So everyone can get the care they need, when they need it.

THE GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Invest \$4.8 billion over the decade to ensure mental healthcare is fully covered under Medicare
- ▲ Make mental health care free by providing unlimited sessions with a psychologist or psychiatrist with no out of pocket fees.
- ▲ Invest \$2.6 billion over the decade to implement a national rollout of the Individual Placement and Support program
- ▲ Increase the number of peer workers by 1,000 workers
- ▲ Address the social determinants of health like economic and social security

PAYING FOR OUR PLAN

By making billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share of tax and winding back handouts to big polluters, we can build a better life for all of us.

1 in 3 big corporations pays no tax and many big corporations and billionaires send their profits offshore tax free.

The Greens will tax billionaires with a new 'billionaires tax', require big corporations making excessive profits to pay a 'corporate super-profits tax' and axe billions of dollars in handouts to the coal, oil and gas giants that are driving the climate crisis.

These measures have all been costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office.

When big corporations and billionaires pay their fair share, everyone can have the services they need for a better life.

ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental ill-health is a huge challenge. After chronic under-investment by successive governments, we have a system that can't meet the needs of thousands of people.

The Greens want to ensure everyone who needs help, can access the treatment, care and support that they need to recover and live well. We should all be able to receive the same healthcare for our physical health, as our mental health.

Our universal mental health care plan is designed to support people at every stage of their mental health journey.

UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Millions of people access mental health professionals through Medicare. However, the Medicare rebate for mental health care doesn't cover the full cost of seeing psychologists and psychiatrists. Cost and location continue to remain significant barriers for people trying to access mental health services.

At the same time, we have seen a growing cohort of people known as the "missing middle" who may be getting primary care but need specialist mental health care services and there are simply not enough available.

The length of mental health care can vary greatly depending on a person's circumstances. In recognition of this, we will permanently uncap the number of sessions available under

Medicare so that Australians are able to access long-term, ongoing mental health care,

The Greens will commit \$4.8 billion across the decade so that mental health care is affordable and available to everyone. Mental health care providers have told us time and time again that the current Medicare rebate has not kept up with the cost of providing mental health care.¹

The Greens will change the rebate so that psychology and psychiatry providers are able to access the Medicare rebate at two tiers. The higher tier (pegged to hourly rates recommended by the peak medical associations) can be accessed by providers where they offer no-gap services.

Where a mental health care provider chooses to price above this increased rebate, they will still be able to access the current rebate level.

This will give mental health care providers a real avenue to providing no-gap mental health care.

The Greens will also reduce the minimum number of participants in group therapy from six people to four people and allow people to access unlimited group therapy sessions.

BEYOND CRISIS: PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Prevention and early intervention are key pillars of a strong mental health system. We need to do

¹https://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/240999/sub387-mental-health.pdf

more to help people before their mental health deteriorates and before they reach crisis point.

The Greens recognise that the pandemic has disproportionately affected many people across our communities. For many young people with mental ill-health, finding and keeping work is harder than ever.

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program helps young people with poor mental health to find stable work through individualised support. The Greens will invest \$2.6 billion to implement a national rollout and expand eligibility of the IPS program.

One of the best ways to prevent mental health issues is by addressing the social determinants of mental health such as unemployment, education, housing, poverty and income inequality. We know that homelessness is on the rise, we know that people simply cannot live above the poverty line on current income support payments. These fundamental social drivers lead to and exacerbate mental ill-health.

The Greens are committed to addressing the social determinants of mental health by raising the rate of income support payments to \$83 a day, building 1 million homes for people on low incomes, and investing in free education from early childhood to TAFE and university.

STRENGTHENING THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

Our mental health workforce continues to bear the brunt of increased demand for services.

There are many ways we can strengthen the

mental health workforce, including through the use of peer workers.

Peer workers are people with lived experience who provide peer support to others with mental ill-health. Evidence shows that peer workers can deliver better outcomes by increasing participation in treatment.

The Greens are committed to significantly increasing the peer workforce. We will invest \$714 million to increase the number of peer workers by 1,000 workers, including First Nations peer workers, on an ongoing basis. This will provide invaluable support for people throughout their recovery.

In any given year, at least 5 million Australians see their GP for assistance with their mental health. It's therefore essential that all primary care practitioners, including GPs, are component in treating mental health. The Greens will continue to advocate for the development of specialised, ongoing mental health training for medical students and GPs

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