



NEWS RELEASE

OLDER AUSTRALIANS WELCOME MENTAL HEALTH PACKAGE

Australia's peak body for older Australians, COTA Australia (Council on the Ageing), has added its voice to those welcoming the Government's mental health reform package.

COTA Australia Chief Executive, Ian Yates, says "older Australians have been concerned for some years about the high level of unmet demand in mental health as a result of the lack of priority given to mental health by state governments and the health system and professions."

"This is a comprehensive, multi-faceted and well resourced package that also contains a commitment to continuing reform and growth over the next decade, not just 'more of the same'.

"Older Australians with mental health issues should benefit from the substantial increases in community mental health services and accessibility and we will be monitoring this very closely as the package is implemented to ensure that older people's mental health needs get an equitable share of services and resources".

"We are disappointed that increased and improved psycho-geriatric services (e.g. support services for people with mental health issues in residential aged care) are not included in this package, but welcome the Minister's commitment that these will be dealt with in Government action on the Productivity Commission's Caring for Older Australians report in the 2012 Budget".

Mr Yates says "this package of mental health reform delivers on the Government's election commitment, and we expect this to be repeated in 2012 with root and branch reform and sustainable funding for aged care".

"2011 will be characterised by many as the Mental Health Budget; 2012 will have to be the Aged Care Budget" Mr Yates said.

Further Information:

Ian Yates
Chief Executive
COTA Australia

Ph: 0418 835 439