

Everybody Counts

ANGLICARE
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Mental health debate too piecemeal

The current debate regarding mental health in Australia is becoming desperate for all concerned. The political parties are bartering on piecemeal responses with Mr Abbott offering more Headspace programs and specialized youth services such as EPPIC, and Ms Gillard offering a more conservative spread of programs across portfolios.

“Mental health is grossly underfunded in Australia, and the response to date is piecemeal” said Anglicare Australia’s John Dutton today.

“Services are stretched to breaking point. Calls to ‘fill the gaps’ belies the problem that the gaps will remain until a comprehensive response is provided by Government”.

“Key services such as Community Mental Health programs that support people in the community to regain their lives, find accommodation and work, are the ‘meat and potatoes’ services that are needed. This is a proven fact worldwide, and Australia is only spending half of what it should to support people with mental illness and their families.”

Anglicare Australia welcomed Minister Roxon’s commitment yesterday to work with the community on mental health if Labor forms the next government, and called for a full collaborative process to be put in place.

“Minister Roxon’s promise to work with the community, made at the opening of the International Youth Mental Health Conference yesterday, needs to be more concrete. We need a timetable for the roll out of a comprehensive plan and a commitment to put real, recurrent, money on the table.”

“Similarly the Opposition’s welcome commitment to youth mental health on the right scale needs to be matched by a real increase in community based services - including housing and employment support.”

“We need to know the next Government is going to make the necessary urgent investment across the whole area of community mental health.”

“An important place to start would be to bring into the process the consumers, carers and those of us working at the coalface” Mr Dutton said.

John Dutton is campaign spokesperson for Anglicare Australia on mental health. He is also CEO of Anglicare North Queensland.

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THE VOICE FOR ANGLICAN CARE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN AUSTRALIA

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