

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 28 August 2013

Psychologists congratulate the Greens on mental health policy

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) congratulates the Australian Greens on their mental health policy, which includes important elements such as the restoration of sessions of psychological treatment under the Better Access initiative, a National Institute for Mental Illness Research, a National Suicide Prevention campaign, and increased funding for the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program.

“The Greens have announced a mental health policy package that will support access to quality and effective mental health services for all Australians,” said APS Executive Director Professor Lyn Littlefield. “This includes the reinstatement of the critical sessions of psychological care that can be accessed through the Better Access initiative under exceptional circumstances, which were lost in recent funding cuts.”

The Better Access funding cuts, which came into effect this year, reduced the number of allowable treatment sessions from 18 to 10 per calendar year.

“Cuts to this highly successful Medicare-funded mental health initiative have had a marked impact on many thousands of Australians with serious yet all too common mental health disorders, primarily involving depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress,” said Professor Littlefield. “Since the cuts, these people can no longer access the appropriate length of effective and cost-efficient psychological treatment they require.”

The Greens costed policy to reinstate the additional sessions of psychological treatment under refined criteria is based on a proposal developed by the APS to ensure that people with serious high prevalence mental health disorders can continue to access effective psychological treatment.

“In more serious cases, people need more than 10 sessions of psychological treatment for it to be effective, and the Greens policy will enable those who need it to access this care,” Professor Littlefield said.

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

The APS recently launched its election document 'Key issues for the 2013 Federal election' in which it outlined 10 opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians, including the need to reinstate the Better Access 'exceptional circumstances' sessions.

APS election document: [Key issues for the 2013 Federal election](#)

For more information, or to arrange an interview, call the APS media phone on 0435 896 444, or email media@psychology.org.au. Find us on Twitter: [@APS_Media](#).

The APS is the largest professional organisation for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 21,000 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to people's lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.