



THE HON MARK BUTLER MP
Minister for Mental Health and Ageing



THE HON KEVIN HUMPHRIES MP
NSW Minister for Mental Health

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

NATION'S MENTAL HEALTH MINISTERS TO ADDRESS LOWER LIFE EXPECTANCY OF PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

Australia's State and Federal Mental Health Ministers will meet in Sydney tomorrow to address the high rates of adverse health outcomes and premature death amongst people with a mental illness.

Federal Minister for Mental Health, Mark Butler, and NSW Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries, will co-host the National Ministerial Summit on Addressing the Premature Death of People with Mental Illness at NSW Parliament House.

Mr Butler said the summit will bring a national focus to addressing the significantly poorer health outcomes experienced by people with a mental illness.

"In our efforts to focus on rehabilitation and recovery from mental illness we have tended to concentrate on the mental health needs of people, but physical health is just as important and we need to make sure those issues aren't ignored," Mr Butler said.

"The Summit will discuss strategies to reduce the rate of avoidable death from issues like cardiovascular, respiratory and infectious diseases.

"The physical health of those with mental illness is a national challenge. We need to work with and empower those with lived experience of mental illness, and their carers and families, to help them better manage and improve their overall health outcomes.

"We need to develop realistic and meaningful reforms across the country that will lead to genuine improvements in the life expectancy and the quality of life of people with a mental illness."

Mr Humphries said Governments could no longer afford to ignore the hidden toll of preventable premature death among people living with a mental illness.

"Too many families have lost their loved ones too soon from preventable physical illnesses exacerbated by mental illness and there are too many families that are currently worried they will lose a loved one too soon," Mr Humphries said.

"People with a serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than the general population and 70 per cent of people with a serious mental illness die from cardiovascular disease compared to 18 per cent of the general population.

"It is a significant – but avoidable – toll, and it would be to any government's shame if we were to ignore it."