

08 June 2010



## Queensland Leads the Nation: Visionary Investment in Mental Health

Peak Body for Mental Health in Queensland, The Queensland Alliance, proclaimed a visionary investment in mental health from today's budget, as Deputy Premier Paul Lucas MP revealed an \$8.5M four-year initiative to reduce negative stereotypes about mental illness.

Queensland Alliance CEO Jeff Cheverton said, "This initiative will create understanding and change the way we include people with mental illness in our communities."

"Queensland now leads Australia in responding to the negative attitudes which still survive in relation to mental illness."

"This is a smart investment in Queenslanders' health. While the investment is modest, its impact on Queenslanders will be significant," he said.

"Reducing discriminatory attitudes towards mental illness means people are more likely to talk about their mental health needs and seek support and treatment early. When treatment is sought early – rather than at crisis point – there is a significant economic benefit, by reduced call on hospital services or productivity loss."

Research from the London School of Economics based on a similar Scottish initiative identified that **for every £1 spent on the campaign there is an economy wide saving of more than £8**. Recently released research in New Zealand identifies similar returns on investment.

"Governments in England, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Scotland and most recently Ireland, have all invested in anti-stigma mental health campaigns to reduce the costs to society of mental illness. Australia is the only OECD country not to do so - and so Queensland is leading the nation with this budget announcement today. We hope the Rudd Government is watching".

"Half of us will experience a mental health disorder at some point in our lives. This initiative means we will no longer respond with fear and ignorance to these experiences."

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