

3 August 2026

The Hon Rose Jackson

Minister for Mental Health
Parliament House
Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

The Hon Yasmin Catley MP

Minister for Police
Parliament House
Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Re: Delivering the full "Having a Mental Health Crisis Is Not a Crime" reform agenda

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of our organisations, we congratulate you on last week's announcement of a new health-led response model for mental health emergency responses. This is a landmark commitment, and one of the most significant investments in mental health crisis care NSW has seen in decades.

The decision to commit more than \$270 million over ten years to a statewide Virtual Mental Health Hub and eight Mental Health Acute Assessment Teams reflects real leadership. It directly responds to the evidence presented to the Bondi Junction Coronial Inquest, the Parliamentary *Inquiry into the accessibility and appropriate delivery of outpatient and community mental health care* in NSW, and the NSW Police Force's own review. It also reflects the years of brave advocacy by people with lived experience, families, carers, advocates and allies who have lost loved ones to a system that too often responded to mental health crises with police interventions rather than healthcare.

We thank you both for listening to those families, and for demonstrating the compassion, leadership and courage needed to act on what they shared.

We see this announcement as an important first step toward implementing the broader reform agenda outlined in *Having a Mental Health Crisis Is Not a Crime*. As the health-led response model is further developed and implemented, we ask you to work with the Alliance to support its success and respectfully ask for your partnership on the following priorities:

- **Evidence-based practice standards applied for any police involvement.**
Where police attendance remains necessary, we ask that it be governed by mental health evidence-based best practice standards and support clinically appropriate, least restrictive care rather than command-and-control policing; and that the criteria for when police, rather than a health-led teams attend, be publicly reported. We would welcome clarity on whether mandatory and comprehensive mental health training for police will be included in this reform and how the active Law Enforcement Conduct Commission review intersects with today's announcement.

- **Formal governance representation** for the mental health sector, including people with lived experience, not only consultation on the model's design but ongoing throughout the implementation.
- **A confirmed rollout timeline**, including first-tranche locations and dates.

We look forward to building on this promising start. We would welcome a joint meeting with both Ministers to discuss these matters and agree a way of working together as this model is implemented and as the remaining commitments in *Having a Mental Health Crisis Is Not a Crime* are delivered.

Yours sincerely,

- Australian Society of Psychiatrists (ASoP)
- BEING - Mental Health Consumers
- Black Dog Institute
- Mental Health Carers NSW
- Mental Health Coordinating Council
- NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP)
- Wayahead - Mental Health Association



Appendix: Statements from NSW Mental Health Alliance members

"Today's decision will go a long way to prevent unnecessary deaths and immeasurable heartache. This is a direct result of years of advocacy by people with lived experience and their families, many of whom have lost loved ones to the current system. We thank Minister Rose Jackson and Minister Yasmin Catley for listening to these families' stories and acting with courage to enact these reforms." — **Giancarlo de Vera, CEO, BEING – Mental Health Consumers**

"This marks the most significant investment in new services for our mental health system in decades. It is wonderful to see a government with the wisdom and compassion to take responsibility for starting to fix our mental health system, after decades of neglect." — **Jonathan Harms, CEO, Mental Health Carers NSW**

"In a crisis, how people are treated is not incidental to safety. It can be the difference between de-escalation and further harm." — **Dr Evelyne Tadros, CEO, Mental Health Coordinating Council**

"Wayahead welcomes this important investment in a more health-led response to mental health crises. People experiencing acute distress deserve timely access to skilled mental health support, reducing the need for emergency departments and police involvement wherever possible. This is a positive step towards delivering the right care, in the right place, at the right time." — **Sharon Grocott, WayAhead**

"A health-led first response is an important step forward. The long-term success of these reforms will depend on continued investment in the mental health workforce, meaningful involvement of people with lived experience and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and access to ongoing care beyond the immediate crisis." — **Dr Ian Korbel, RANZCP NSW Branch Chair**

"We welcome this important investment in strengthening mental health crisis responses. However, as these reforms are implemented, the focus must remain on the person experiencing the crisis. The true measure of success will not simply be fewer police call-outs or shorter emergency department waits, but whether people receive timely follow-up care, are supported in their recovery, and are less likely to experience another crisis." — **Dr Pramudie Gunaratne, CEO, Australian Society of Psychiatrists**