

15 March 2024

Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care
Australian Federal Government

By email to: minister.butler@health.gov.au

Dear Minister Butler,

Together, we represent thousands of psychiatrists across every state and territory in Australia.

We are writing to you to express our deep concern about the chronic and severe psychiatry workforce shortage in Australia, and the impact this has on our patients.

Every year, one in five Australians will experience a mental health condition, and almost half of Australians will experience mental ill-health in their lifetime. Mental ill-health touches the lives of every Australian.

However, too many people cannot get the help they need. Australians are waiting too long, or worse, going without, vital mental health care services and support.

When Australians hold out their hand for help, it's the workforce that's there to meet them. Without the workforce, hospitals are just buildings and clinics are just rooms.

In your own words: **“Comprehensive mental health reform is contingent on having an available workforce.”**

We are calling for urgent and sustainable investment to grow the psychiatry workforce to meet the mental health needs of every Australian.

We must:

- Attract more people to a career in psychiatry
- Train enough high-quality practitioners, and
- Retain the current workforce by preventing burnout

This must be underpinned by high quality national data that tells us what is needed, where, when and how.

We write to you from the front-line of this crisis, asking for help, and ready to be part of the solution.

Help us, help you.

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President, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP)

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