



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health and Aged Care

The Hon. David Coleman MP

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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New strategy and research centre to support Australians with eating disorders

For the first time, Australia has a 10-year strategy which will guide critical research and transform how we treat and care for nearly one million Australians who suffer from bulimia, anorexia and other eating disorders.

Today the Morrison Government is launching the Australian Eating Disorder Research and Translation Strategy 2021–2031. The Strategy, which has been developed under a \$4 million federal grant by the InsideOut Institute, identifies the top 10 priority areas in greatest need of additional research.

Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt, said eating disorders were serious, complex and life-threatening mental illnesses and the Strategy provides a clear national approach to ensuring best-practice prevention, early intervention, and treatment now and in the future.

“At any given time, approximately one million Australians, or around four per cent of the population, are living with an eating disorder,” Minister Hunt said.

“Tragically, eating disorders have one of the highest mortality rates of any psychiatric illness, with anorexia being the deadliest of all mental health conditions.”

“Strengthening eating disorder research and translation in Australia will ensure that we find and deliver the latest and best possible support for those impacted and their families and carers. It will lead to significant improvements in the wellbeing of those with an eating disorder and, most importantly, will save lives.”

The 10 research priorities identified in the Strategy are prevention, risk and protective factors, early identification, equity of access, treatment outcomes, individualised medicine, family support, early intervention, positive and negative treatment impacts, stigma and health promotion.

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, David Coleman, said eating disorders are extremely complex and we need to do a lot more to better understand them.

“The 2021-22 Budget also provided a further \$26.9 million for eating disorder research and support, including \$13 million to establish a National Eating Disorder Research Centre,” Assistant Minister Coleman said.

“This new dedicated centre of excellence will lead ground-breaking research to help advance our understanding of eating disorders and the most effective approaches to prevention, early intervention and treatment. It will also ensure that Australia remains at the forefront of the international efforts to combat these devastating illnesses.”

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

A grant opportunity will open on September 22 to identify an organisation, or a consortium of organisations, to lead the establishment of the research centre. Grant guidelines will be published on Grant Connect at www.grants.gov.au.

The Morrison Government has made mental health a national priority, and since 2018 has delivered unprecedented support for eating disorder research, support and treatment. This includes historic investments such as \$110.7 million to provide up to 40 Medicare-subsidised psychological and 20 dietetic therapy sessions, \$63 million for establishment of a national network of residential eating disorders treatment centres, \$5 million for research through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), and \$13.4 million for the National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC).

Through the \$2.3 billion National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan in the 2021-22 Budget, the Morrison Government continues to transform the mental health system to ensure that all Australians can access, high-quality, person-centred care when and where it is needed.

If you or anyone you know is concerned about eating disorder or body image issues, you can contact the Butterfly Foundation's national eating disorders helpline, ED Hope, on 1800 33 4673 or through www.butterfly.org.au.

Anyone experiencing distress can also seek immediate advice and support through Lifeline (13 11 14), Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800), or the Government's digital mental health gateway, Head to Health (www.headtohealth.gov.au).

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