



Community Mental Health Australia

The Economic Case for Psychosocial Support

Cathy O'Toole | President CMHA

July 7th 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

I live on the unceded lands of the Wulgurukaba and neighbouring Bindal people. I pay my respects to their Elders, and the Elders of the unceded lands across Australia past, present and rising.

I also pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here in this webinar today.

Recognition of Lived Experience

CMHA recognises people with Lived Experience as rights-holders and knowledge-holders.

Our purpose is to be ambitious for change where human rights are at the heart of mental health system interactions driven by Community Managed Mental Health Sector Organisations in partnership with Lived Experience.



CMHA is the national peak body for the community-managed mental health sector

What we stand for: CMHA is driven by a vision for transformation - where human rights are at the heart of mental health systems, and people with lived experience are co-leading change. Our work is grounded in values that shape every aspect of how we engage, advocate, and collaborate.

This is why we commissioned this work.

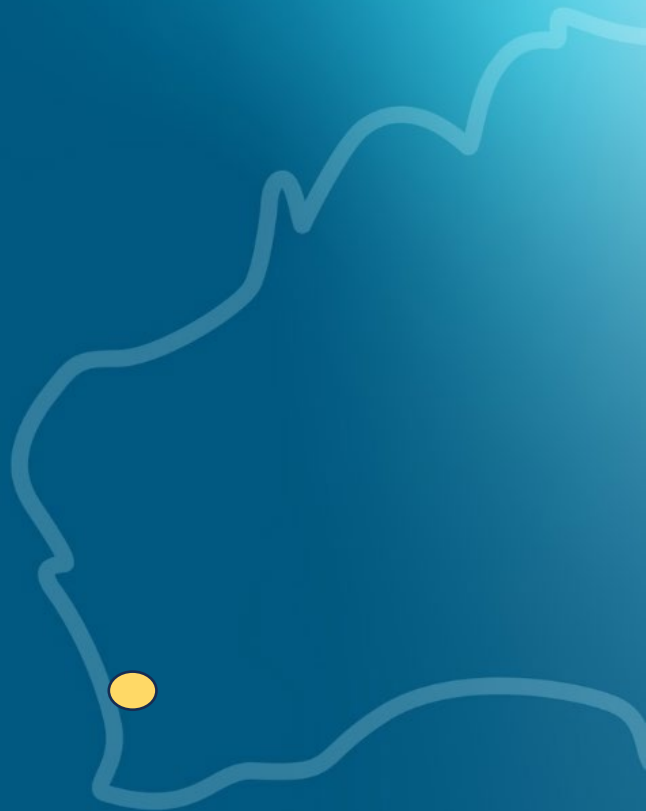
This is an economics report - about people: We recognise that people's lives cannot be reduced to numbers alone. However, economic analysis strengthens our collective voice and helps guide investment, policy and system design.



Kerry Hawkins (She/Her) CEO

On unceded Wadjuk Noongar boodja, Boorloo | Perth

Context is the signal not the noise



Locating this Technical Report: in time



**Indigenous
Australian
Lived Experience
Centre**



**Gayaa Dhuwi
(Proud Spirit)
Australia**



**Mental Health Carers
Australia**



CMHA
Community Mental Health Australia



March 2026



July 2026: Workshop
co-creating next steps

Discussion Paper: Capturing the Economic Value of Psychosocial Support Discussion Paper, March 2026
<https://apo.org.au/node/333851>

Locating this Technical Report: in policy

Decisions guiding our investments in mental health are opinion-rich and data-poor.

“...little data is available on the impact and efficacy of the billions of dollars invested by governments across the system each year, or the experiences and outcomes of people who receive support through the system, and their families, carers and kin.”¹

This report provides for the first time, decision-grade data to fill this gap and guide mental health investment decisions.

¹ National Mental Health Commission. National Report Card 2023. Sydney: NMHC; 2024, p7.



Investing in Mental Health: The Economic Case for Psychosocial Support

We are deeply aware of the system-generated silences and silencing this Report highlights – human rights, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB perspectives, families/significant others, and Culturally and Linguistically Marginalised communities.

We will continue this crucial work to build the evidence with our Alliance partners, and engage with states and territories to continue this conversation.

We welcome further questions and engagement.

We thank Paul, Lisette and the team at UWA for their deep attention to language and intellectual curiosity.



Thank You

Next: Professor Paul Flatau, University of Western Australia

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