

Media Statement



Independent Evaluation Overwhelmingly Positive

December 16, 2016

Please attribute to headspace interim CEO Matthew Posar:

“The independent evaluation into **headspace** is overwhelmingly positive, and has been publicly available since May.

Its findings have been welcomed by the Federal Government and went a long way into the government’s decision to expand **headspace** to 10 more centres across Australia.

headspace and its early intervention services have been a huge success across Australia. The service has provided greater and more timely access, and treatment, for huge numbers of young Australians.

In ten years, more than 270,000 young Australians have received help and treatment at **headspace** centres and through **headspace** services.

headspace is an innovative, developing service at the forefront of youth mental health, right around the world, with its model and learnings being adopted internationally.

The evaluation and its findings were based on a period of time in 2013/2014 when 67 **headspace** centres were operating nationally. Given the time between then, and the release of the report in May, 2016, many of the challenges and recommendations had already been addressed by the **headspace** network.

headspace shared the findings with MP’s, PHN’s, stakeholders and the sector after pushing for its public release.

The evaluation found **headspace** treatment costs were comparable to community mental health service delivery and if **headspace** did not exist, “it is likely that large numbers of young people would not access services or would access them at a much later stage in the development of their disorders, potentially incurring significant costs to the government as well as difficulties for the young people and their families”.

The report was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted significant successes achieved by **headspace** including:

- **headspace** services reduce suicidal ideation and self-harm
- **headspace** is accessible to a diverse group of young people with high levels of psychological distress
- **headspace** attracts young people from marginalised and at risk groups, and people traditionally disadvantaged in their access to health care including Indigenous young people, young people living in regional areas and those identifying as LGBTI
- young people using **headspace** services had better outcomes than young people receiving other treatment or no treatment

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- generally speaking the more services young people accessed, the better the outcome (i.e. people accessing 7+ sessions improved more than those attending once or twice)
- young people receiving **headspace** support took fewer days off work and study due to mental health issues so there were significant social and economic outcomes
- **headspace** clients were overwhelmingly positive about **headspace** and generally satisfied with the services they received

Challenges were also identified and addressed as follows:

- the evaluation recommended extending hours, which has been adopted universally
- the evaluation identified parent awareness of **headspace** as an issue. Since the evaluation there have been two public education campaigns specifically targeting parents and research shows more than 50% of parents know about headspace and would recommend headspace to young people
- the evaluation recommends offering family therapy, since the report was released, **headspace** has developed and rolled out a program to enable centres to provide family inclusive support services
- the report identified the need to work more closely with GPs and since then **headspace** has developed an online training program with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to support the quality of care provided by GP's across Australia.
- the report identified a need to increase cultural awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people which is being proactively addressed with cultural competency and wellbeing training in centres across Australia
- the evaluation identified a need to make services more accessible to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities is also underway with a suite of resources being developed to cater for parents of CALD young people

A copy of the report has been publicly available on the **headspace** website since May, when it was released by the Federal Government.”

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Evaluation-of-headspace-program.pdf>

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