



New polling shows support for mental health prevention not hospitals

Eighty-five per cent of WA voters want the major parties to increase investment into mental health programs that reduced the pressure on ambulance calls outs and emergency department presentations, according to new polling released today.

The research conducted by Painted Dog for the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) also found that 83 per cent of people want alternatives to hospital for their mental health distress and 75 per cent of people agree that the government needs to increase investment in community support programs that help people to live well at home and out of hospital.

The polling also showed that 77 per cent of people believe the COVID pandemic has made the issue of mental health worse in WA.

WAAMH CEO Taryn Harvey said the figures showed that the current Labor Government must do more to listen to the people who access mental health services in Western Australia, who do not want hospital emergency department to be their first port of call for care.

“We have heard consistently from the Labor Premier Mark McGowan that mental health presentations are contributing to ambulance ramping, so the best solution for that is to invest in the kinds of programs that keep people away from emergency departments, not drive them there,” she said.

“The simple fact of the matter is that people don’t want to go to hospital and this polling we have released today proves that. It is now up to the WA Labor Government to invest in mental health prevention and community support and all political parties to put pressure on the government to make sure they do.

“Mental health is shaping up to be a contest of ideas this State election, where we now have two of the major parties already release their mental health election commitments in line with the ten-year plan and one that doesn’t.

“Yesterday the WA Labor Government announced their mental health election commitments which was treatment-focused and lacking in community support and preventative mental health programs that keep people well and out of hospital, and instead it continues to drive people to the acute end of care.”

The WA Association for Mental Health will be releasing an election scorecard next week assessing each parties mental health policies in line with the Better Choices, Better lives, ten year plan for mental health and alcohol and other drugs 2015-2015.

Full list of polling stats:

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: The government needs to increase investment in community support programs that provide people with mental health support to live well in the community.



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- Overall 75% of people agree
 - 78% of females
 - 72% of males
 - 79% over 55
 - 81% aged 60-69
 - 80% of young families
 - 80% of Mature families
 - 81% of people who live inner city
 - 91% of people who live western suburbs
 - 76% of people who live north east metro
 - 72% of people who live south east metro
 - 78% of people who live South West Metro
- 2. To what extent would you agree or disagree that COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on people's mental health as a whole?
 - Overall 77% agree
 - 81% of females
 - 82% of 30-39 year old
 - 87% of young families
 - 79% of mature families
 - 81% of working
 - 81% of inner city
- 3. To what extent would you support or oppose a political party that that increased investment in mental health support programs and initiatives focussed on:
 - Offering an effective alternative to hospitals
 - Overall 83%
 - 85% of female
 - 86% of 35-54 years old
 - 86% of young and mature families
 - Preventing people from developing a mental health issue
 - Overall 82%
 - 83% of female
 - 87% of mature families
 - Reducing the pressure on ambulance call outs and emergency departments services
 - Overall 85%
 - 86% of female
 - 88% of young families
 - Help prevent hospital admissions
 - Overall 80%
 - 86% of 60-69 year olds
 - 83% of young families

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