

## Pre Budget Submission 2022-2023

The Mindgardens Neuroscience Network (Mindgardens) thanks the federal government for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the 2022-2023 federal budget.

### The Issue:

Two decades ago, the Comprehensive Cancer Care Centre movement transformed cancer outcomes by bringing together expertise in different forms of the disease, research and treatment approaches into integrated organisations focused on the experience of patients. **The early progress of Mindgardens, which adopts a parallel model, confirms this approach will similarly unlock important benefits for people who live with mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological disorders and improve access to high quality person-centred treatment across the mental health care system for all Australians.**

### Background:

Nearly one-third of the non-fatal burden of disease in Australia in 2018 was caused by mental health and substance use disorders (24%) and neurological conditions (7.9%) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021). In addition, there is evidence that neurological, mental health and substance use disorders rarely exist in isolation and having comorbidities increases disease burden costs, effects the course an illness takes including the services an individual will require.

In 2018-19 the direct economic costs of mental ill-health and suicide in Australia were estimated at \$43–70 billion. These estimates include: direct expenditure on healthcare and other supports and services (\$16 billion); lower economic participation and lost productivity (\$12–39 billion); and informal care provided by family and friends (\$15 billion). The cost of disability and premature death due to mental ill-health, suicide and self-inflicted injury is equivalent to a further \$151 billion (Productivity Commission, Mental Health, Inquiry Report, 2020).

During these past two years, Australians have also experienced the challenges of isolation, fear for loved ones, and the uncertainty that COVID-19 brings to all aspects of our lives. The pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on our communities, with demonstrably increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression. In a recent report on the impact of the pandemic to May 2021 (AIHW 2021), the proportion of young people experiencing severe psychological distress increased by 16% to pre-pandemic levels. There was also a steady rise in the number of mental health services across the community subsidised by Medicare between mid-March and mid-December 2020, which likely reflects increased need and increased availability of services during this period.

Slow progress in finding new treatments for many mental health and neurological disorders, poor translation of research outcomes into practice, ineffective implementation of the best models of care, and a lack of integration across hospitals, community care, primary health practitioners and policy makers, all contribute to an overall growth in the burden of disease. This has an enormous negative impact on patients, families, the community, health costs and lost national productivity. Finding effective solutions to these complex issues and challenges requires bold thinking: a reimagining of the way in which we coordinate and integrate efforts and investments across research, clinical care and the education of the next generation of clinicians and health professionals.

### About Mindgardens:

Established as an alliance in 2017, Mindgardens ambition is to **transform the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support services for people who experience mental health, drug and alcohol and/or neurological disorders**. Located in the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct, Sydney, the founding members of Mindgardens are the **Black Dog Institute, Neuroscience Research Australia, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, and the University of New South Wales**. Since its establishment, Mindgardens has evolved in its corporate governance structure to ensure shared vision, strong leadership, a cohesive value proposition, and a clear roadmap for achieving objectives.

We are very excited to be able to share that as a result of the initial \$7 million funding generously granted in 2019 under the Australian Government's Community Health and Hospitals Program, Mindgardens has rapidly laid research and operational foundations and begun to yield tangible results for patients and communities. At the same time, Mindgardens has successfully developed cross-disciplinary understanding among its member organisations, and gained a growing reputation for distinctive translational expertise at the intersection of clinical practice, research and education. It is the power to leverage our members expertise and transform the collaborative capacity that allows Mindgardens to uniquely focus on real-world questions with the greatest potential to improve people's lives.

Some notable successes in Mindgardens first two years of operation include:

- The creation of the Mindgardens **Psychosis Flagship**, which integrates a successful state-wide Apex Clinic known as the Tertiary Referral Service for Psychosis (TRSP). The TRSP is NSW's only specialised tertiary referral psychosis service and is leading the way in setting new benchmarks for the quality of clinical care in public mental health services. This pioneering centre provides specialised tertiary referral psychosis services that combines the very best in expert clinical assessments and treatments with professional education and training in higher level clinical skills, family and community engagement, and clinical research.
- The delivery of the Mindgardens **Apex Clinic for Depression**, co-designed with people with lived experience of mood disorders and expert in the combination of treatments for people with complex depression, including medication, psychotherapy, exercise physiology and digital self-care.
- The development of the Mindgardens **Youth Integration Project**, which will co-design and test more streamlined access pathways for young people who use mental health and drug and alcohol services, focusing on improving integration and navigation between Commonwealth and State services. Through this project, Mindgardens is advising headspace National on its use of psychiatry services.
- Attracting over 5 million dollars in state grants and philanthropic support and over 3 million in direct and in-kind support from Mindgardens members, amplifying the impact of the Commonwealth's initial investment.

These successes are complemented by a **diverse program of more than 25 research and implementation activities**, all of which contribute to tangible impacts for patients and communities who experience mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological disorders. These include: an exploration of exercise therapy to reduce depression linked to chronic pain; development of tools, measurements and online applications to improve psychological wellbeing; and using technology outreach to support mental health consumers who are also experiencing physical health concerns.

In addition, the Mindgardens Dementia Flagship is underway and supports the vision for world-leading comprehensive dementia diagnosis, care and research centres for Australians - the National Comprehensive Dementia Centre (NCDC) Network - that would provide an urgently needed single door to timely diagnosis, clinical care and treatment, and ongoing support for people with dementia, their families and their carers. The NCDC Network is being led by Mindgardens, in partnership with Dementia Australia, with the aim of bringing together the efforts of GPs, clinical specialists, health professionals, aged care service providers, dementia advocacy groups and existing research programs in a unified approach to supporting people with dementia.

Mindgardens has a significant number of existing strengths and assets upon which to build a globally recognised health, education and research translation network. Across all domains, Mindgardens is underpinned by core expertise and operating principles, including:

- Expertise in **health system design** that allows Mindgardens to identify opportunities to integrate elements of the service system and improve the patient journey for people who experience mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological disorders. This perspective allows patient outcomes to be optimised at the same time as producing service efficiencies and supporting the states and territories in meeting their obligations under the forthcoming National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.
- Strong **linkages and networking** between specialist clinics, community support and the primary care sector ensures all new treatment approaches and service models are developed in real world settings and can be practically implemented across multiple tiers of the health service system.
- Enhanced capacity to develop **technology and governance systems** for sharing of patient information between Mindgardens member organisations, and including in the primary care sector. This work is

essential to improving pathways for patients and has enormous potential to become a model for adoption in other states and territories.

- The integration of a **lived experience focus** across Mindgardens, including the launch of the *Elevating Lived Experience in Research Community of Practice*, which builds researchers' capacity to incorporate consumer and carer perspectives into the design and implementation of research studies.

### Recommendation:

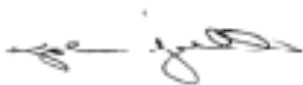
Mindgardens calls on the federal government to commit a further \$7 million over 2 years to support the implementation of Mindgardens 4-year strategic goals:

1. **Drive better outcomes through research and innovation translation**
2. **Maximise the impact of collaboration, co-design and partnerships**
3. **Build a learning healthcare ecosystem**


By focusing on translational research strategies to achieve better care and outcomes for patients, Mindgardens seeks to deliver real and sustainable system wide change for people living with mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological disorders. Innovative models of care such as Mindgardens specialist clinics for patients with complex and acute needs (eg. for psychosis and depression), community hubs (to improve the interface between physical health and mental health, as well as alternatives to emergency departments) and digital technologies for prevention and outreach, will support personalised and seamless care. Patients will have easy, appropriate and integrated access to ongoing high-quality care and be offered the newest and most promising mental health, drug and alcohol neurological disorders treatments through better integration of service delivery, research and education.

While shared member infrastructure will facilitate collaborative clinical, research and education approaches including for sharing data systems, clinical trials frameworks, integrated care pathways for people with mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological disorders and supporting clinicians develop their research skills and expertise. The **key feature that will accelerate the benefits of translational research is the creation of MINDLabs** which bring together people with lived experience, clinicians, researchers, health managers, and the community in an integrated manner, to create new opportunities for training and building capacity and capabilities around translational research, co-design and co-production.

The additional Commonwealth investment will allow Mindgardens to build on its early successes and ensure its evidence-based service innovations are ready to be scaled and implemented across Australia, thereby supporting access to these essential health services. Importantly, a further investment would consolidate the Commonwealth's initial investment and secure the benefits to be accrued nationally, including positioning Mindgardens to continue to successfully leverage additional support from state governments and philanthropic benefactors.



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