

## SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT:

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEARNINGS FROM THE ACT REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN 2019-2024 REFLECTIVE REVIEW

The ACT Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2024 Reflective Review (the Reflective Review) pinpoints a number of key activities across the mental health and suicide prevention sectors between 2019 and 2024 that were facilitated, supported, and informed by the 2019-2024 Regional Plan. It also critically analyses the 2019-2024 Regional Plan and identifies some lessons learned that were used to support the development and implementation of the 2025-2030 Regional Plan.

Some of the key highlights of the 2019-2024 Regional Plan include:

- Consulted with the sector and began planning for the commissioning of ACT Government-funded mental health and suicide prevention services in the ACT.
- Established the Canberra Medicare Mental Health Centre, the Medicare Mental Health phone service, and Safe Haven Belconnen, through collaborative approaches.
- Began development of the Medicare Mental Health Kids Hub, the Tuggeranong Medicare Mental Health Centre, a Youth Trauma Service, and support for perinatal mental health screening initiatives.
- Developed the Child and Youth Mental Health Services Alliance, through a partnership approach between ACT Government, Capital Health Network, and the Youth Coalition of the ACT.
- Procured the Early Intervention Service for Eating Disorders to improve client outcomes and promote active recovery.
- Developed and delivered the Territory-wide Model of Care for Eating Disorders, which includes the Stepped-Continuum of Care for eating disorders.
- Enhanced and expanded existing aftercare supports for those who have been discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt (Aftercare Services Program).
- Implemented a pilot to expand referral and entry pathways to aftercare support from other health setting to capture those who have experienced a suicidal crisis without being admitted to hospital.
- Commencement of the Minds Together program by Everymind in the ACT.
- Recruited a Director of Lived Experience to lead and support peer workforce and lived experience initiatives.

There were also numerous challenges within the ACT mental health and suicide prevention systems between 2019 and 2024 that impacted the implementation of the 2019-2024 Regional Plan. These challenges were analysed as part of the Reflective Review process, with the aim of learning from them and identifying what could be changed to help improve future regional planning activities. In particular, the learnings detailed below were incorporated into the development of the 2025-2030 Regional Plan.

### Unpredictability of the system and needs

<b>What did we see and hear?</b>	Feedback suggested that the 2019-2024 Regional Plan was limited in its ability to respond to changes and deliver the programs and services that were needed. Changes can happen rapidly, affecting the mental health and suicide prevention sectors as well as the needs of the community in major and unpredictable ways. The most significant disruptor during the life of the 2019-2024 Regional Plan was the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a widespread impact on wellbeing, service access, and community and social dynamics.
<b>What did we learn?</b>	Systems need to be able to quickly and effectively respond to major changes, which requires pre-planning, inbuilt flexibility, strong relationships, frequent checkpoints, and openness to opportunities for innovation.
<b>What will we do in the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Plan timeframes for the new 2025-2030 Regional Plan were reduced to ensure more responsive and flexible planning.</li> <li>• Stronger consideration of enabling factors in the 2025-2030 Regional Plan to improve preparedness for uncertainty</li> </ul>

### Value of foundational enablers

<b>What did we see and hear?</b>	Some of the 2019-2024 Regional Plan's priorities were limited by a lack of core supporting work or 'enablers'. Enablers that would have been beneficial included more comprehensive data, compatible governance systems, and stronger communication. However, when these core supports did exist, it often benefited several different priorities.
<b>What did we learn?</b>	Making change often relies on certain foundational supports being in place. They can be challenging to establish, but can also have widespread benefits across the mental health and suicide prevention systems if they are prioritised before more specific or targeted goals.
<b>What will we do in the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified the following as universal foundational enablers: communication and collaboration; resources, funding, and time; data and information; governance and leadership; and technology and digital services.</li> <li>• Ensure the enablers will be included in the 2025-2030 Regional Plan's Action and Implementation Plan (AIM Plan) and addressed early in regional planning activities.</li> </ul>

## Accessibility

<b>What did we see and hear?</b>	The content of the 2019-2024 Regional Plan was complex, which made it difficult to understand how it applied to different stakeholders and limited its use. Producing an Easy English version of the plan was helpful, but didn't inherently make it accessible for all groups.
<b>What did we learn?</b>	Accessibility includes practical elements like words and visuals- but can also mean a document is relevant for its intended audience, useful, comprehensive, and easy to understand.
<b>What will we do in the future?</b>	The new 2025-2030 Regional Plan clearly defines important terms and concepts and has been written in community friendly language.

## Embedding suicide prevention

<b>What did we see and hear?</b>	Feedback pointed out that suicide prevention was included in the 2019-2024 Regional Plan as one of the 'Strategic Priorities', separating it from other parts of the Plan. While suicide prevention is a different field to mental health, they also have significant overlap.
<b>What did we learn?</b>	It is vital that suicide prevention is framed as an over-arching principle, as this work is done across many levels of many different systems and sectors.
<b>What will we do in the future?</b>	Suicide prevention is embedded across all aspects of the 2025-2030 Regional Plan, instead of as a standalone priority area.

## Leadership and implementation

<b>What did we see and hear?</b>	Some elements of the 2019-2024 Regional Plan faced barriers to being actioned because the Plan had not identified clear leadership to progress the action and encourage engagement, participation, and commitments from other parts of the sector. A lack of strong leadership was also seen as limiting opportunities for innovation, as there was less confidence to take risks or try something new.
<b>What did we learn?</b>	Systemic change does not happen organically, but instead needs to be intentionally progressed. In some cases, working towards change might be better supported by an organised group or consortium, where different skills can be leveraged and the burden shared.
<b>What will we do in the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all actions in the AIM Plan for the new 2025-2030 Regional Plan have a clear action lead and ownership stated in the plan.</li><li>• Leverage opportunities for collaborative regional leadership to progress system change.</li></ul>

## Interconnected ecosystem

<b>What did we see and hear?</b>	The 2019-2024 Regional Plan was structured in a way that separated many different parts of the system. This made it hard to understand what concepts, priorities, or outcomes were relevant to activities that sat across multiple areas.
<b>What did we learn?</b>	All parts of the mental health and suicide prevention systems form one larger, interconnected ecosystem, which further links to all other social determinants of health. Strategic planning efforts need to accommodate this complexity and reflect the variation in consumer and carer journeys.
<b>What will we do in the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and incorporate the key social determinates for good mental health in the 2025-2030 Regional Plan's AIM Plan.</li><li>• Promote holistic approaches to mental health through future regional planning activities.</li></ul>