

**4 April, 2019**

**Mental Health Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City, ACT 2601**

Dear Commissioners

**Re: The Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health**

To inform the Commission's inquiry into the social and economic benefits of improving mental health, Australian Unity commends the attached research article published in BMC Psychiatry (2019) edition.

As a provider of mental health services through its wholly owned subsidiary Remedy Healthcare, Australian Unity offers a practical, commercial perspective to the Commission's deliberations.

In particular, Australian Unity notes the Commission's terms of reference regarding an examination of the effectiveness of current programs and initiatives, and its concerns about the missed opportunities to scale up programs and supports for broader benefits.

Australian Unity considers Remedy Healthcare's mental health service MindStep® a program that has potential for broader application in domestic settings, including potentially through the public health system.

In this regard, Australian Unity notes the UK program on which MindStep is modelled, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), now treats 560,000 patients per year. In its first three years, IAPT saw 45,000 people move off sick pay and benefits.

The outcomes of MindStep are outlined in the attached paper. Australian Unity recommends its content to the Commission as it enquires into this important national issues.

Sincerely

**Mike Hutton-Squire | Executive General Manager | Health Services**

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