**18/535: Government Response – Petition 7–18 Eating Disorder Services in the ACT**

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| **Summary of Impacts** |
| * Eating disorders are serious illnesses that cause high levels of psychological distress and significant physical health complications. They are estimated to affect four per cent of the Australian population. * The ACT Eating Disorders Position Statement, outlined in this Cabinet Submission, describes a number of immediate and future options for the development of eating disorders services in the ACT. These options demonstrate a commitment to ensuring positive change for the management and care of eating disorders and will have a number of positive social and economic benefits. * The most significant impacts will be the improvement of the range, quality and accessibility of eating disorder services. This will lead to associated improvements in the health outcomes for people with eating disorders. * Eating disorders can carry extensive costs to individuals and to the community. A report into these costs estimated that eating disorders resulted in productivity impacts of approximately $15.1 billion to the Australian economy in 2012[[1]](#footnote-1). * The focus of the Position Statement is on health promotion and early intervention services rather than the provision acute services. This will have long term beneficial effects on health expenditure, by addressing problems early and alleviating the burden of disease. * Work to improve the health outcomes of people with eating disorders, and their carers, will have positive economic effects for the ACT Budget, productivity, employment and the ACT community in general. * No environmental impacts have been identified in the development of the Position Statement. |

*Key to impacts: Red – negative, Blue - neutral and Green - positive.*

**Social**

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| **Community and Individual Health** | * People with eating disorders experience high levels pf psychological distress. Compared to the general population they have increased risks of co-morbid physical illnesses and suicide. * The Position Statement describes a number of initiatives that will improve the range, quality and accessibility of eating disorder services in the ACT. * An underlying principle to the Position Statement is a focus on early intervention and health promotion, compared to continuing historic emphases on acute inpatient services. Enabling the early recognition and treatment of eating disorders improves longer term outcomes and can prevent the mental and physical deterioration of people who experience eating disorders. * This Cabinet Submission and the Position Statement carry a large number of benefits to both community and individual health in the ACT. |
| **Access to services** | * Key elements of the Position Statement includes working towards people with eating disorders having better access to services. Better access includes improving the range of services available, developing better referral pathways and ensuring linkages between different services and settings. |
| **Education** | * Eating disorders most frequently start in childhood and youth. As a result, they can have harmful impacts on physical growth and educational outcomes of young people. Improving the health outcomes of people with eating disorders will likely lead to improvements in educational outcomes. |

**Economic**

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| **ACT Government Budget** | * This Cabinet Submission itself does not have immediate financial and budget impacts. However, with Cabinet approval of the Position Statement, future Budget Business Cases for eating disorder services will have financial impacts. * The approach to developing eating disorders services described by the Position Statement, in particular its focus on early intervention services, will have beneficial impacts on reducing health expenditure. * It is estimated that the average cost of treatment per day in the community is approximately $319 for an individual[[2]](#footnote-2). Whereas, the average cost per day for a general acute admission into an inpatient mental health unit in the ACT is approximately $1,094. |
| **Productivity** | * The Paying the Price report estimated that, in 2012, the productivity impacts of eating disorders equated to $15.1 billion for Australia[[3]](#footnote-3). * These productivity costs are borne largely by individuals, across areas such as lower employment participation and greater absenteeism as a result of illness or caring for people with eating disorders. Governments and employers are also affected, through lower taxation revenue and the increased rates of sick leave for people with eating disorders, and their carers, respectively. * As a result, efforts to improve the health outcomes of people with eating disorders, and the services available to them, will have beneficial effects on productivity. |
| **Employment** | * As above, eating disorders can have a large impact on the employment participation of people with eating disorders and their family or carers. As a result, the developments to eating disorder services detailed in this Cabinet Submission will have positive impacts on employment and participation. |

**Environmental**

Nil Impact

1. Butterfly Foundation, 2012. *Paying the price: the economic and social impact of eating disorders in Australia,* Butterfly Foundation, Melbourne. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. *Mental health services – in brief 2017*. Cat. No. HSE 192. Canberra: AIHW. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Butterfly Foundation, 2012. *Paying the price: the economic and social impact of eating disorders in Australia,* Butterfly Foundation, Melbourne. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)