



Final Review of the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement

Call for submissions

The Commission has released this paper to assist individuals and organisations to prepare submissions. It contains and outlines:

- the scope of the review
- the Commission's procedures
- matters about which the Commission is seeking comment and information
- how to make a submission.

The Productivity Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.

The Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission (PC) is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed most simply, is to help governments make better policies, in the long-term interest of the Australian community.

The PC's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

For more information, visit the PC's website: pc.gov.au

Call for submissions

The PC has released this call for submissions to assist individuals and organisations to prepare submissions to the review. It contains and outlines:

- the scope of the review
- the PC's procedures
- matters about which the PC is seeking comment and information
- how to make a submission (see attachment B).

Participants should not feel that they are restricted to comment only on matters raised in this paper. The PC wishes to receive information and comment on issues which participants consider relevant to the review's terms of reference.

Key dates

Receipt of terms of reference	30 January 2025
Due date for submissions	12 March 2025
Release of draft report	June 2025
Public hearings	July – August 2025
Final report to Government	17 October 2025

Contact details

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Website	pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health-review

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Final Review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement

The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission (PC) to undertake the final review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

Signed in 2022, the Agreement articulates a national vision for a people-centred, integrated and sustainable mental health and suicide prevention system. The Agreement outlines how the Australian, state and territory governments will work together to make sure the mental health and suicide prevention system embeds lived experience in the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of services and is able to improve the wellbeing of all Australians and reduce the rate of suicide in Australia. Download the full Agreement from the [Federal Financial Relations website](#).

The Agreement establishes a framework for reform of the mental health and suicide prevention system; this framework operates alongside commitments made under the National Health Reform Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap that affect mental health and suicide prevention outcomes. It identifies priority areas for action within the mental health and suicide prevention system, including enabling a whole-of-government approach to services, several data improvements and consistent evaluation.

In addition to establishing a vision and identifying priority areas for reform, the Agreement sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Australian, state and territory governments within the mental health and suicide prevention system and includes accountability and reporting mechanisms to monitor progress. Bilateral agreements, signed by the Australian Government with each state and territory, complement the Agreement with a suite of commitments for localised collaborative efforts and funding transfers.

What have we been asked to do?

The PC has been asked to assess and make recommendations on the effectiveness of programs and services delivered under the Agreement as well as the way governments work to achieve the goals of the Agreement (attachment A). Aspects of the mental health and suicide prevention system that are not covered by the Agreement (for example, funding provided through the National Health Reform Agreement), are outside the scope of this review.

To inform its recommendations, the PC is calling for submissions from:

- people with lived and/or living experience of mental ill-health and suicide and their families and carers
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
- people from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, LGBTIQ+SB people, people with disability and people who live in rural and remote regions
- practitioners, service providers, peak bodies, advocacy organisations and government agencies
- and other people and organisations that have an interest in mental health and suicide prevention.

Making a submission

We acknowledge that many individuals and organisations have made submissions and other contributions as part of previous inquiries into mental health and suicide prevention in Australia. This review will take into consideration what we heard previously where it is relevant to the Agreement.

Submission writers are encouraged to identify issues and provide suggestions for ways forward. The PC would appreciate evidence in support of any views, such as data, research reports and case studies.

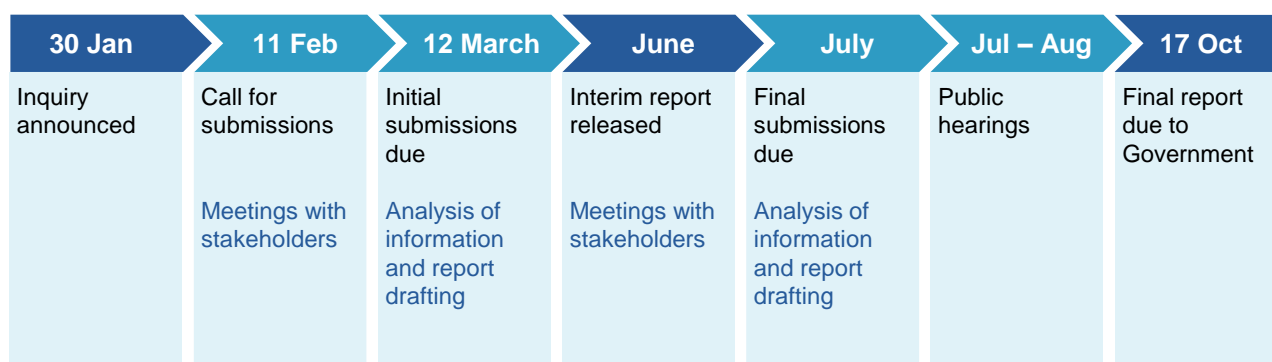
Submissions are requested by **12 March 2025** (figure 1).

Further information on how to prepare and lodge submissions is provided below (attachment B).

Alternatively, individuals and organisations are invited to provide their views through a short survey on the PC's webpage: engage.pc.gov.au/projects/mental-health-and-suicide-prevention.

To find out more about the review go to pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health-review or contact Tracey Horsfall on 02 6240 3261.

Figure 1 – Key steps in the review



A. Terms of reference

I, The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, pursuant to Parts 2 and 3 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998*, hereby request that the Productivity Commission (the PC) undertake the Final Review into the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

Background

Mental health is a key component of overall health and wellbeing. In any year in Australia, an estimated 1 in 5 people aged 16–85 will experience a mental disorder, and reported mental wellbeing has declined over the past decade. Poor mental health has broader impacts, as it is associated with poorer social, physical health and economic outcomes for individuals, and can impact workforce participation and productivity. Strengthening the wellbeing and capabilities of Australians is key to underpinning continued growth in Australia's productivity and living standards.

Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death for Australians, with more than 3,000 people dying by suicide every year. Suicide prevention is complex; given the range of factors that can contribute to suicidal distress. In addition to efforts to strengthen the mental health system, effective suicide prevention requires targeted approaches to ensure a range of supports are available to individuals in need.

Australian Governments are making significant investments to improve Australians' mental health and prevent suicide. During 2021-22, national recurrent spending on mental health-and suicide prevention related services was estimated to be almost \$12.2 billion. Annual average spending has increased by 3% since 2017-18 in real terms, reflecting the priority placed by Australian Governments on investing in Australians' mental wellbeing. The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement) sets out the shared intention of Commonwealth, state and territory governments to work in partnership. Australian governments are collaboratively seeking to improve the mental health and reduce the incidence of suicide of all Australians.

A central component of the National Agreement is a shared commitment to transform and improve Australia's mental health and suicide prevention system (Clause 20), including to provide an effective approach to the needs of people at risk of suicide (Clause 122). The Final Review of the National Agreement will assess the objectives, outcomes, and outputs of the National Agreement and its intent to strengthen the evidence base for policy development and identify opportunities for systemic reform. The Final Review will play a key role in identifying opportunities to improve the effectiveness of this significant investment in Australia's human capital.

While the National Agreement sets out the national objectives, outcomes, and outputs for mental health and suicide prevention, individual bilateral agreements (as schedules to the National Agreement) detail the jurisdiction-specific commitments, including funding, which have been adapted to local contexts (Clause 4 and 16). Therefore, the Final Review will assess existing commitments, including those outlined in Schedule A and the bilateral schedules, which support the broader goals of the National Agreement. The Final Review will also provide valuable insights to inform the design of any future arrangements beyond June 2026, ensuring continued progress in mental health and suicide prevention efforts.

The PC is focused on improving understanding of opportunities to improve Australia's national prosperity and economic progress more broadly. Through reporting functions such as the Report on Government Services and Closing the Gap reporting, the PC plays a central role promoting improvements in public service delivery across jurisdictions and over time. The PC's 2023 5-Year Productivity Inquiry also identified that the productivity of Australia's services sector, especially non-market services, will become increasingly important to Australia's productivity going forward. Reflecting this, the Commonwealth Government identified 'Delivering quality care more efficiently' to be one of five pillars of its Productivity Agenda. Commissioning the PC to complete the Final Review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement is an acknowledgement of the central importance of mental health and suicide prevention to Australia's overall wellbeing and the opportunity for evidence-based policy to support quality and productivity improvements in service delivery.

Scope of the inquiry

The PC is to conduct the Final Review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

In undertaking the review, the PC should holistically consider, assess and make recommendations on the effectiveness and operation of these programs and services in line with the National Agreement, including, but not limited to:

- a) The impact of mental health and suicide prevention programs and services delivered under the National Agreement to Australia's wellbeing and productivity
- b) the effectiveness of reforms to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the National Agreement including across different communities and populations
- c) the opportunities under the National Agreement to adopt best practice approaches across Australia, particularly where productivity improvements could be achieved
- d) the extent to which the National Agreement enables the preparedness and effectiveness of the mental health and suicide prevention services to respond to current and emerging priorities
- e) whether any unintended consequences have occurred such as cost shifting, inefficiencies or adverse consumer outcomes
- f) effectiveness of the administration of the National Agreement, including the integration and implementation of Schedule A and the bilateral schedules that support its broader goals
- g) effectiveness of reporting and governance arrangements for the National Agreement
- h) applicability of the roles and responsibilities established in the National Agreement, and
- i) without limiting the matters on which the PC may report, in making recommendations the PC should consider the complexity of integrating services across jurisdictions and ensuring that the voices of First Nations people and those with lived and/or living experience of mental ill-health and suicide, including families, carers and kin are heard and acted upon.

In doing so, the scope should include assessment of the integration of social and emotional wellbeing principles, and cultural safety and responsiveness for First Nations people.

The National Agreement is intended to complement other agreements, including the National Health Reform Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and should be examined in this context.

Process

The PC is to undertake an appropriate public consultation process including holding hearings, inviting public submissions and releasing an interim report to the public.

The PC's comprehensive and culturally appropriate consultation should include Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, commissioning bodies, service providers, peak body organisations, people

with lived and/or living experience of mental ill-health and suicide, First Nations communities, priority cohorts and other relevant stakeholders.

In undertaking the review, the PC should have regard to previous inquiries where relevant, including but not limited to the PC's inquiry into Mental Health completed in June 2020 and the final advice of the National Suicide Prevention Advisor in December 2020, as well as other work that may have explored complementary themes. The PC will also consider reports delivered through the National Agreement and Bilateral Schedules.

The PC should make recommendations for the National Agreement that aim to enhance the effectiveness, accessibility, affordability and safety of the mental health and suicide prevention system.

Deliverables

An interim report followed by a final report and recommendations should be provided to the Parties of the National Agreement by 17 October 2025.

The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Treasurer

[Received 30 January 2025]

B. How to make a submission

How to prepare a submission

Written submissions may range from a short comment outlining your views on a particular topic to a much more substantial document covering a range of issues. Where possible, you should provide evidence, such as relevant data and documentation, to support your views.

Publishing submissions

- Each submission, except for any attachment supplied in confidence, will be published on the PC's website shortly after receipt, and will remain there indefinitely as a public document.
- The PC reserves the right to not publish material on its website that is offensive, potentially defamatory, or clearly out of scope for the inquiry or study in question.

Copyright

- Copyright in submissions sent to the PC resides with the author(s), not with the PC.
- Do not send us material for which you are not the copyright owner – such as pictures, photos and newspaper articles – you should just reference or link to this material in your submission.

In confidence material

- This is a public review and all submissions should be provided as public documents that can be placed on the PC's website for others to read and comment on. However, information which is of a confidential nature or which is submitted in confidence can be treated as such by the PC, provided the cause for such treatment is shown.
- The PC may also request a non-confidential summary of the confidential material it is given, or the reasons why a summary cannot be provided.
- Material supplied in confidence should be clearly marked 'IN CONFIDENCE' and be in a separate attachment to non-confidential material.
- You are encouraged to contact the PC for further information and advice before submitting such material.

Privacy

- For privacy reasons, all **personal** details (e.g. home and email address, signatures and phone numbers) will be removed before they are published on the website.
- You may wish to remain anonymous or use a pseudonym.

Technical tips

- The PC prefers to receive submissions as a Microsoft Word (.docx) files. PDF files are acceptable if produced from a Word document or similar text based software. You may wish to search the Internet on how to make your documents more accessible or for the more technical, follow advice from Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1: <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>
- Do not send password protected files.

- Track changes, editing marks, hidden text and internal links should be removed from submissions.
- To minimise linking problems, type the full web address (for example, <http://www.referred-website.com/folder/file-name.html>).

How to lodge a submission

Submissions should be lodged using the online form on the PC's website. Submissions lodged by post should be accompanied by a submission cover sheet, available from the PC's website.

Online*	pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health-review
Post*	Review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement Productivity Commission GPO Box 1428 Barton ACT 2600
Phone	Please contact the Administrative Officer on 02 6240 3261

* If you do not receive notification of receipt of your submission to the PC, please contact the Administrative Officer.

Due date for submissions

Please send submissions to the PC by **Wednesday 12 March 2025**.