



**Matt Kean**

Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation

**Tanya Davies**

Minister for Mental Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Millions of workers will be the focus of New South Wales' first ever summit aimed at developing a statewide strategy to improve mental health in the workplace.

Minister for Better Regulation Matt Kean said improving mental health strategies in the workplace would not only improve productivity, but also improve lives.

"That's what this is really about – a better quality of life at work and at home," Mr Kean said.

Adults spend more than one third of their lives at work, making this environment critically important to both their physical and mental health.

"At any one time, one in six people of working age suffer from mental illness across Australia, which equates to 800,000 people in NSW, so this is a huge issue."

Mr Kean and Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies have released a discussion paper ahead of the summit, which examines issues around mental health in the workplace and will guide the conversation in the lead up to and during the summit.

"Mental illness does not discriminate and can touch the lives of people anywhere, which is why prevention and early intervention strategies are key, and the workplace should not be an exception," Mrs Davies said.

"This *Mentally Healthy Workplaces* strategy further demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to improving mental health across the state."

Australia's leading mental health experts will help develop the strategy and attend the summit with business leaders, union representatives and government officials.

The Summit is part of SafeWork NSW's Work Health and Safety Roadmap for NSW 2022, a six-year plan that aims to reduce serious work-related injuries and illnesses, including mental illnesses, by 30 per cent.

The strategy will align closely with the NSW Government's decade-long *Living Well* reform, which aims to shift the focus of mental health care from hospitals to the community.

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## **BACKGROUND:**

The invitation-only Mentally Healthy Workplaces Summit will be held on 8 and 9 November 2017. It will feature international keynote speakers, expert panels and workshops that will contribute to the development of the Mentally Health Workplaces Strategy for NSW.

The discussion paper also details other mental health related impacts in the workplace, including:

- The average cost to the community for each work related disease is \$24,800
- A person with a severe mental health condition can have up to 42 days off work, in addition to normal sick leave, costing the NSW economy an estimated \$1.5 billion every year.
- For every dollar spent on successful mental health initiatives, there are \$2.30 in benefits to the organisation.