

**MEDIA RELEASE
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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION CALL FOR MENTAL HEALTH PREVENTION FOCUS

[MELBOURNE, 17 November, 2020] - Leading mental health not-for-profit Smiling Mind has welcomed the release of the Productivity Commission Report into Mental Health and called for generational reform of Australia's mental health system.

Smiling Mind CEO and clinical psychologist Dr Addie Wootten said the report was right to highlight that too many people experienced preventable physical and mental distress, disruptions in education and employment, relationship breakdown, stigma, and loss of life satisfaction and opportunities as a result of poor mental health.

"The challenge is so great, that too often we focus on managing the problem of mental ill-health at the expense of building a solid foundation of prevention," Dr Wootten said.

"A strong mental health system cannot over-index. We need balanced and targeted funding for mental health prevention as well as clinical services for those experiencing mental illness.

"We know Australians are proactively looking to manage their mental health in 2020. At Smiling Mind, over a million people have accessed our tools and resources in the last twelve months alone, and we're experiencing record demand from parents, teachers, students and children."

Dr Wootten said the Productivity Commission's findings reflected Smiling Mind's own research.

"Since our establishment eight years ago, we have been promoting the importance of mental health programs in schools, with digital delivery the most efficient and scalable solution.

"Parents of children that use our app have seen the advantages of daily mental health practices in their own lives, and that is why more than 5 million people have downloaded our app.

Smiling Mind welcomes the Productivity Commission's recommendations prioritising preventative mental health approaches to support children, families and schools.

"Digital mental health services are the future, but we cannot just transpose the analog systems and processes that we have been running. The first step to a strong preventative system is a range of digital tools that have a strong user experience, adaptability and a focus on prevention" Dr Wootten said.

For more information on the benefits of preventative mental health solutions through digital delivery, please go to www.smilingmind.com.au.

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About Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a whole lot more than Australia's #1 mindfulness app.

It's a not-for-profit that is helping make future generations happier and healthier through the practice of mindfulness meditation – a proactive approach to maintaining positive mental health.

Since launching in 2012, Smiling Mind has helped 5.4 million people's minds thrive with hundreds of free meditations, activities, tools and resources.

Note to editors

Interviews with spokespeople are available on request. For more information, case studies, imagery or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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