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# Mental Health State Network Meeting

A National Update  
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# The Community Services Section: what we do

The Section is responsible for:

- management of the *Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities* Initiative
- policy development and program management of the *Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care* Program – including the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) component and GP Psych Support;



## What we do continued..

- management of the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT)
- provision of funding to Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA) to target transcultural mental health and suicide prevention; and
- implementation of the National Perinatal Depression Initiative.



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# Today I will talk about...

- ATAPS
  - The ATAPS refocus/review currently taking place which includes:
    - Telephone-Based CBT and
    - Suicide Prevention demonstration projects
  - PND
  - The new ATAPS guidelines
  - The Drought Measure
- Questions?



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# Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) – Background

- Divisions of General Practice act as fundholders for ATAPS and are allocated an annual budget to broker allied mental health services for patients of GPs who are assessed as having a mental health disorder.



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- Allied health professionals (AHPs) eligible to provide mental health services for ATAPS are: Psychologists, Social Workers, Mental Health Nurses, Occupational Therapists and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers.



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# ATAPS and Better Access

- The Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and GPs through the Medicare Benefits Schedule Initiative which was introduced on 1 November 2006 has had a varying impact on ATAPS across the country.



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# Target Groups

Divisions are now focusing their ATAPS projects on special needs groups which include, but are not limited to:

- Youth;
- Culturally and linguistically diverse people;
- Homeless populations;
- Indigenous populations; and
- Outreach to rural and remote areas where access to psychological services is limited.



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## Currently, work on ATAPS includes:

- Assessing 6 monthly reports from the January-June 2008 period – these are nearly all done, there are about 12 in total still to be processed
- Assessment and recommendations of carryover applications.
- Addressing situations that have arisen in a few Divisions which have fully expensed their ATAPS funding already for this 2008/09 financial year.



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# ATAPS Refocus

- In March 2008, the Minister approved a refocus of the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) to increasingly complement the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule Program.



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- The refocus will help ensure a more targeted approach to the provision of psychological therapies and will address service gaps, particularly in communities not well serviced by private Medicare-eligible services as well as vulnerable population groups such as people at risk of suicide and indigenous people.



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# ATAPS Refocus Continued

- An ATAPS Expert Review Committee met on 5 November to discuss the future of ATAPS. The Australian General Practice Network was a member of this committee. From this meeting, a discussion paper about ATAPS is being developed and will be circulated to the Divisions network for comments and input.
- We expect to be able to provide further advice to Divisions by Christmas, and details by Jan/Feb 2009.



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# **ATAPS Refocus – What has already happened?**

## **Telephone-Based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**

- The Australian Government is funding a trial of Telephone-Based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (T-CBT) under ATAPS in 2008-09.
- The trial, which commenced service provision in October this year, provides telephone-based therapy in a number of rural and remote Divisions of General Practice.
- 24 Divisions of General Practice have been funded for this trial, 4 in NSW.



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- Training has been completed for T-CBT Allied Health Professionals.
- Training was delivered in the form of a Webinar and teleconference
- Achievements so far: There has been active participation and interest in the Webinar training session by Allied Health professionals.
- Challenges for T-CBT: uptake of referrals have been slow to begin with. There will be a need for Divisions to actively promote this innovative service delivery model.



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## **Additional Support for Patients at Risk of Suicide and Self-Harm**

Additional funding is also being provided to some Divisions of General Practice under ATAPS in 2008-09 to establish and operate demonstration sites to support GPs with patients at risk of suicide or self harm.



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- Training has been provided to all Allied Health Professionals that form part of the trial.
- Training is delivered through a DVD and online assessment modules.
- Achievements so far: many different innovative models of service delivery have been developed by Divisions taking part in the trial.
- Challenges: It will be challenging to work in an environment that is outside the normal scope of Divisions - eg. working with Accident and Emergency and providing access to services after hours and on weekends.



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# National Perinatal Depression Initiative

The Initiative aims to:

- improve prevention and early detection (screening for around 270,000 women)
- provide better care, support and treatment (support for around 41,000 women)



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# Australian Government Commitment

- \$20 million - ATAPS
- \$30 million - States and Territories
- \$5 million – *beyondblue*



# Key Activities

AHMAC has agreed to the key activities of:

- routine and universal screening
- workforce training and development
- follow up support and care
- research and data collection



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# Training and Development

Training and development for:

- screening
- referrals
- management



# Support and Care

Treatment, support and care including through:

- ATAPS
- Better Access
- Non-directive Pregnancy Counselling



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# ATAPS will...

- Forge key links with maternal services
- Promote the use of care pathways
- Focus on communities with special needs
- Service delivery – not limited to PND, but reported separately



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# National Perinatal Depression Initiative Working Group

Current activities involve:

- Progressing the development of the Initiative
- Broad stakeholder representation



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# Revised ATAPS Guidelines

- The consultation process for the development of the revised guidelines involved the AGPN, GP representatives and the Australian Psychological Society.
- The previous edition of the guidelines was produced in 2005, and since then it became obvious that revision was needed to ensure that the guidelines reflected the complementary nature of ATAPS with Better Access, as well as policy changes.



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# Major Changes

These include:

- Clarification of the use of Probationary/Student Psychologists
- Number of focussed psychological strategy sessions available to consumers
- Mental Health Care Plan and referral for focussed psychological strategies – exceptions include the possibility of a non-GP referral



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- Aged Care Facilities
- Group Therapy
- Parents, Guardians
- Innovative delivery



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# Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities Initiative

- The 2007-2008 Budget committed \$10.1 million over two years (2007-2008 and 2008-2009) in recognition that farmers and rural communities are facing a drought which is unprecedented in terms of its severity, duration and widespread impact.
- The majority of the funding has been allocated to 43 eligible rural and remote Divisions of General Practice.
- 12 are located in NSW, 8 in Queensland, 10 in South Australia and 13 in Victoria.



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## Activities include:

- crisis counselling for distressed individuals, families and communities, including triage and service coordination and brokerage;
- community outreach activities, including forming relationships with key community organisations (eg local councils, schools);
- contributions to the overall drought response in communities by leading and developing a local, primary care based mental health drought plan.



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Any questions?



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# Contact details

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