

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Call for Australia's first Minister for Men's Health**

MensLine Australia, the nation's leading support service for men which specialises in family and relationship issues, is calling for the appointment of Australia's first ever Minister for Men's Health to advocate for a whole of government approach to men's health, mental health and wellbeing issues.

Alyson Miller, the CEO of Crisis Support Services who deliver MensLine, said that the appointment of a Minister for Men's Health would send the right message to the Australian community.

"This symbolic appointment would elevate men's health and wellbeing and strengthen Australia's commitment to achieving equal health outcomes for males, particularly those at risk.

"It would also ensure a whole of government approach and tackle some of the fragmentation in the way in which male policies and programs are managed," Alyson Miller said.

"At a Federal Government level three departments oversee different aspects of male policy, with men and family relationships programs separate to male health, family and relationship centres and family law."

Currently, the Hon Warren Snowden MP has responsibility for male health and holds the title of Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Minister for Indigenous Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac.

"This Australian first would also formalise Minister Snowden's current responsibility for men's health and elevate his good work on the National Male Health Policy released in 2010," Alyson Miller said.

This proposal is contained in Crisis Support Services' Pre-Budget Submission to the Federal Government, submitted last month for consideration in the 2012-13 Budget.

"While the 2011-12 Budget contained some important mental health reform measures, the importance of men's health and wellbeing needs to be kept on the agenda," Alyson Miller said.

"This is why we are also calling on the Government to expand MensLine so that it becomes a national gateway for management of all men's health and wellbeing issues.

"We know that men are much less likely to seek medical help and contact multiple services so it's important to make sure we can address as many issues in one call as possible."

MensLine, which celebrated 10 years of service last year, is available nationally 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For support now call 1300 78 99 78 or visit [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

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For a copy of Crisis Support Services' Pre-Budget Submission please visit [www.crisissupport.org.au](http://www.crisissupport.org.au)