



# NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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## GPs and the Divisions Network – the key to better child health and wellbeing

The Australian Divisions of General Practice welcomes the Federal Opposition's most recent policy blueprint, *Children's Health – Goals for Aussie Kids*.

Kate Carnell, ADGP CEO said "Child health is an important government and community priority. There can be no better investment than in the health and wellbeing of our children.

"In developing strategies to deliver better child health and wellbeing, it is vital that we put in place programs where children and families are most likely to have access to them – in schools, communities, and primary care."

"It is also important that any policy blueprint for child health recognise and support the central role of general practice as a source of advice for parents and the first point of coordinated care and referral for children" said Ms Carnell.

Mental health problems often go undiagnosed in young people.

"Having a coordinated approach to the mental health of our children would help to reduce a myriad of other problems such as physical health problems, chronic mental health problems later in life, poor school engagement and workforce participation."

To build a strong overall prevention and early intervention agenda for child health we must invest in childhood mental health. We need strategies that:

- engage and support general practitioners and general practice in partnership with other health care professionals such as psychologists and community pharmacists
- invest seriously in quality care and early intervention in the primary health care setting
- integrate primary and specialist systems of care by better linking schools, GPs, and other services such as child and maternal health and child and adolescent mental health services.

"We particularly welcome the Opposition's support for national implementation of the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program. We hope that governments at the upcoming COAG meeting will give serious consideration to an investment in Triple P as part of a revitalised national mental health agenda " said Ms Carnell.

Ms Carnell added "In our submission to the Federal Government's COAG interdepartmental committee, ADGP has recommended an investment of \$194 million over 4 years for the continuation and expansion of the successful *MindMatters* program in Australian secondary schools and the introduction of a similar program in all Australian primary schools.

"It is important that we support schools who are dealing with children at risk with viable and accessible pathways to care. As part of the package, we also recommend national implementation of the world-leading positive parenting program, Triple P."

"There is irrefutable evidence that investing in the health and wellbeing of children and families through parenting programs gets results" said Ms Carnell.

"Investing in programs such as MindMatters and Triple P is a low risk, high yield investment for governments. It will provide high returns and positive outcomes for children, their families, governments and communities."

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