The Hon Chris Bowen MP

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House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Shadow Minister for Health

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a debilitating mental illness affecting tens of thousands of Australians.

The impacts of BPD are severe:

* 10% of people with BPD will die by suicide
* The life span of a person with BPD is almost two decades less than other Australians
* People with BPD have among the highest rates of drug and alcohol use, poor physical, sexual and reproductive health and high levels of unemployment.

It is estimated between two and five per cent of the Australian population suffers from BPD – more than schizophrenia and bipolar disorder– yet people suffering from BPD find it difficult or impossible to access the treatment they need.

Back in 2012 an expert committee worked with the National Health and Medical Research Council to develop the Clinical Practical Guideline for the Management of Borderline Personality Disorder (2012).

This resulted in 63 recommendations covering BPD diagnosis, management, treatment and information for supporting carers and families.

Despite the Guidelines being officially launched by former Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler in 2013, they have not been implemented.

The Guidelines require GPs, emergency department workers, psychologists and psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians to receive much needed training in the diagnosis and treatment of BPD and to ensure all Australians with the condition have access to the structured psychological treatments effective in treating this illness.

We urge you to ensure that a strategy is developed for implementing the Clinical Practical Guideline for the Management of Borderline Personality Disorder (2012) and to make access to appropriate treatment for people suffering from BPD a priority for mental health service development.

Yours sincerely