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## Labor's mental health policy will lead to better support for workers with mental illness

The ACTU has welcomed Labor's mental health policy, announced yesterday, for its focus on improving workplace mental health and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace.

ACTU assistant secretary Michael Borowick said the policy would be a step forward for mental health in Australia.

"Mental illness is a crucial issue, both for those workers who are affected, but also for the overall productivity of Australia."

"It is one that is too often ignored due to the taboos that still surround it, which makes life even more difficult for sufferers."

"The ACTU supports any measures which support workers with mental illness to get and maintain jobs. Workplace mental health is critical to a competitive Australia."

"Labor announced it would commit \$83 million to address priority areas in mental health, enhancing the five year, \$2.2 billion mental health reform package the Government is delivering throughout Australia.

"This includes \$40 million to support new and existing workplace mental health and suicide prevention initiatives, and the development of Australia's first National Workplace Mental Health strategy. The strategy will have a particular focus on reducing the stigma around mental illness in the workplace.

Mr Borowick said that workplace stresses and bullying often caused or exacerbated mental illness for workers.

"Workplace stress and bullying is a cause of mental health issues for many Australians. One of the worst results of workplace stress it can destroy a victim's ability to work."

"The National Workplace Mental Health strategy needs to recognise that we will not have safe workplaces in Australia until we recognise the damage caused by stresses in the workplace."

"All workers have the right to a safe, healthy work environment and the right to return to work after illness."

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