2 April 2019 – Butterfly Foundation will coordinate the delivery of six in-community residential treatment facilities for eating disorders under the Australia Government’s 2019-20 Federal Budget commitment of $70.2 million.

Butterfly Foundation CEO, Kevin Barrow, said this is the key next step in national investment in evidence-based treatment for one million Australians living with an eating disorder.

Mr Barrow welcomed the Government’s commitment recognising that it reflected the core recommendations in The National Agenda for Eating Disorders 2017-2022, where health system reform investment was prioritised to deliver measurable change.

“Butterfly looks forward to working closely with the local teams tasked with implementation together with our eating disorders colleagues in each location. This is the next significant moment for Australians living with an eating disorder and their families, recognising that regardless of your personal circumstances you should have access to the most appropriate treatment close to your home,” said Mr Barrow.

The Government will invest $63 million in new in-community residential treatment facilities for eating disorders which are to be located in ACT and Western Australia, with four additional new locations to be announced. This news builds on the $110 million landmark investment of a dedicated Medicare Benefits Scheme item for intensive multidisciplinary eating disorders treatment due to be delivered on 1 November 2019.

“Access to treatment too often comes with financial barriers, and for many, long-distance travel adds to the inevitable financial hardship that comes with intensive treatment. The new residential facilities are a key addition to the in-community setting which will use Medicare items for eligible services in a dedicated residential model of care. This is an important much needed change in the way Australians access high-quality treatment and care for eating disorders in these new settings,” Mr Barrow said.

Included in the $70.2 million package is $3.6 million funding for Butterfly Foundation to coordinate the implementation of these new residential facilities, as well as ongoing funding of $3.6m for the National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC), over the next three years.

“We look forward to playing a key coordination role in bringing key stakeholders together to set up each facility and thank the Government for recognising Butterfly’s expertise.
“Thanks to the extraordinary commitment from the sector and families living with eating disorders, we are paving the way for change and creating a new reality for many in our community,” said Mr Barrow.

“For the past decade, the NEDC has played a significant role in developing a coordinated and cohesive national approach to the evidence-base, as well as translating this into practical skills for researchers and professional healthcare providers.”

From 2019 to 2021 a key area of responsibility for the NEDC will be to continue to take a leading role in providing evidence-based resources and support to medical, mental and allied health workers to extend their expertise and understanding of eating disorders.

“Enhancing our workforce’s expertise is crucial to expanding eating disorders treatment and services across the country. The NEDC will work with medical and professional health peak bodies to assist the delivery of this vital training and knowledge to the workforce,” concluded Mr Barrow.

“Butterfly welcomes the strong leadership from our national political leaders. Their passion and commitment to help Australians who are battling severe and potentially life-threatening psychological illnesses are to be admired. However, there is still much to accomplish in the national reform agenda for eating disorders, including commitments to primary prevention, carer support and strong referral pathways between national, state and territory health systems.”

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NOTE TO ALL EDITORS AND PRODUCERS – Please refer to the Mindframe National Guidelines for Safe Reporting and include the below help seeking advice in all media coverage.

Anyone needing support with eating disorders or body image issues is encouraged to contact Butterfly Foundation National Helpline 1800 ED HOPE on 1800 33 4673 or support@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au For urgent support call Lifeline 13 11 14

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