

## **\$1.47 million mental health and substance use study to target transition from adolescence to young adulthood**

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NDARC's Professor Maree Teesson and her colleagues at the Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use (CREMS) have been awarded a \$1.47 million NHMRC project grant to study prevention and early intervention for mental illness and substance use during the critical transition period from adolescence to young adulthood.

The grant was announced by Federal Minister for Health the Hon. Greg Hunt as part of \$53 million research funding for mental health treatment, prevention and care.

The project will build on the CLIMATE Schools Combined (CSC) study, a world-first randomised controlled trial of a combined, internet-delivered school based approach to preventing substance use, anxiety and depression, which has been delivered to 6,500 Australian school children. The new project will follow the existing cohort over the critical transition to early adulthood.

Professor Teesson will lead the trial in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Queensland, the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University, and Deakin University.

"Substance use and mental disorders are the leading causes of burden of disease in young people globally and the peak of this disability occurs in those aged 15-24 years," said Professor Teesson.

"Critically, substance use disorders, depression and anxiety frequently co-occur, share common risk factors, and interact. A young person's ability to cope with these unique challenges can have profound effects on their subsequent life-course, their communities and Australia's economic future.

"Our results from the first three years of delivering school based prevention that targets substance use, anxiety and depression together are very promising.

"What we now need to know is whether these prevention effects are sustained during the critical transition period from adolescence into young adulthood, when adult vocational and social roles are established, and rates of substance use and mental health problems are highest."

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