

Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THIS MENTAL HEALTH WEEK THE JUNCTION WANTS TO KNOW - **HOW'S YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?**

With renowned comedian and Mental Health Peer Worker Kylie Harrison, The Junction this Mental Health Week is launching a website that aims to reduce stigma associated with mental illness by asking us all to consider our mental health.

Country Health SA Acting Director Mental Health Strategic Operations Nicole Jones said the planned community events during Mental Health Week are a fantastic way to raise awareness of mental health in rural and regional communities.

"I congratulate The South East Junction, Mental Health Activity and Resource Centre for being awarded this funding to help build greater community awareness and understanding of mental health and reduce stigma in the community," Ms Jones said.

"These local events are part of how we are encouraging all South Australians to stop and ask, 'How's my mental health?'"

Mental Health Coalition of South Australia (MHCSA) Executive Director Geoff Harris says just like those who live in the city, people in regional and remote parts of the state may fear the stigma associated with mental illness.

"Stigma can often be the reason why people don't reach out for help," says Harris. "Mental Health Week aims to reduce this by growing community awareness about mental illness and how people can get help while teaching communities what they can do to help each other."

The Mental Health Coalition of SA is the peak body of the non-government community mental health sector that coordinates Mental Health Week from October 4 – 10. This year they have awarded 13 regional grants to communities for local events that promote mental health and well-being.

The website launch and comedy act will be held at Wehl Street Theatre, 7 Wehl Street South, Mount Gambier with a gold coin donation from 10:30am. This will be followed by just comedy at 7:00pm at a charge of \$5.

For more information on an event or grant received by your community please contact Louise Pascale on 0424 208 787.

Facts About Mental Illness

The 2013 *National Mental Health Commissions Contributing Life* study identified the following fact about Mental Health in Australia.

Up to 49% of Australians would avoid someone with a mental illness.

37% of Australians wouldn't employ someone with chronic schizophrenia and 23% wouldn't employ someone with depression.

About 60% of family members report experiencing negative, hurtful and offensive attitudes from the public.

65% of people who have experienced a mental health problem in the last 12 months have not sought help for that problem.

A quarter of 16–24 year olds have experienced symptoms of a mental health problem in the past 12 months.

About 50% of mental health problems emerge by the mid-teens, and 75% by age 25

Mental health peer workers are professionals who have a lived experience of mental illness, either personally or as a family member, and they bring this expertise to their work. Peer workers perform at least as well as other staff in reducing hospitalisation rates and levels of drug and alcohol use in the people they work with.

Physical health is an important issue for all of us. People with severe mental illness die around 25 years younger than the rest of the population. The major causes of death are highly preventable such as cardio-vascular disease and diabetes.

66% of people with psychotic illness smoke compared with 25% in the general population.

Public health campaigns and mental health services have failed regarding physical health of this segment of the population. (SANE: Mental illness and physical health: the facts. 2014)

When reporting on mental illness please refer to mindframe's guidelines for the media

<http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media/reporting-mental-illness#ReportStoryMI>