



MEDIA RELEASE

People impacted by serious mental health issues are being urged to reach out and get help from an innovative service by key not-for-profit to help people with mental health issues.

The project is called “Finding North” and has been created by the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia. CEO Tony Stevenson says it is alarming that 154,000 Australians with a severe or complex mental illness are – in essence – getting no support. He says it is basically enough people to fill 388 jumbo jets (747 jumbo jets)*.

People who are being impacted in any way by serious mental health issues are being urged to reach out and get help from an innovative service designed to help people with issues.

The project is called “Finding North” and it is an initiative of the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) – who are a not-for-profit organisation.

MIFA National CEO, Tony Stevenson, says it is deeply alarming that a massive 154,000 Australians who have a severe and complex mental illness are basically getting no support. He says statistically, it is enough people to fill 388 standard jumbo jets*.

MIFA has been coordinating a major alliance of over 40 organisations, spread across the mental health sector, advocating for governments to end the neglect. Tony Stevenson says the neglect is a human rights issue and says many governments continue to aimlessly kick the can down the road when it comes to funding new investments to support people. He says the current situation is totally unacceptable.

Tony Stevenson said, “People with severe and complex mental health issues are currently experiencing shorter lives. Some die up to 23 years earlier than the general population. Around 50% of people with the most severe mental illness attempt suicide compared with 3.7% of the general population. Many face relationship breakdowns, stigma, long stays in hospital, homelessness and much more.”

“Governments seem to have no appetite to get the issues dealt with – despite the fact they acknowledge there is a gap. It is deeply alarming that the current system channels people into emergency and hospital services which adds extra trauma to those involved and huge extra pressure on the system. We need more prevention and certainly much more investment in community mental health recovery services.”

Tony Stevenson highlights MIFA has set up a key network that it is still building called “Finding North”. Put simply, it is a growing on-line community of people with mental health



issues who want to share their experiences and help others in the same boat. It is both safe and secure.

Tony Stevenson added, "It is a place where people with firsthand experiences of mental illness can then connect as a community. It is ultimately a forum for people to share experiences and discuss fresh ideas."

To find out more, all people need to do is go to www.findingnorth.org.au.

(*A standard 747 Boeing Jumbo Jet has 396 seats on board).

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