



MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY 22ND MAY, 2025

The key not-for-profit Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) is warning a massive number of Australians with high need mental health challenges and their family carers are currently getting no access to community supports which help them with daily living skills, housing support, employment opportunities and more.

MIFA CEO Tony Stevenson says it is ‘time up’ for all politicians who are clearly neglecting people with mental health issues. He highlights people living with schizophrenia may experience a 19-year gap in life expectancy as well as spending huge amounts of time in hospital and being at risk of homelessness and poverty.

Tony Stevenson says politicians have been aware of the glaring gaps in mental health since 2019 but decision makers are not actually acting on the issues.

The major not-for-profit Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) is launching a campaign to highlight to all politicians that time is up when it comes to the clear neglect of people facing the most severe mental health challenges.

MIFA CEO, Tony Stevenson, says hundreds of thousands of people across Australia live with severe mental health challenges. He says these people are simply not getting access to community supports. He warns that is the same situation for family carers.

Tony Stevenson says an estimated 230,500 Australians with high need mental health challenges, are not getting access to community supports. These supports help people with daily living skills, housing support, employment opportunities and more.

Tony Stevenson said, "It is incredibly serious what is happening because – for instance – people impacted by schizophrenia have a massive 19-year gap in life expectancy compared to others. They experience very significant physical ill health, long periods of time in hospital and, sadly, they are at a high risk of homelessness and poverty."

Tony Stevenson added, "Politicians have been aware of the massive community support gap since 2019 when very highly regarded programs were dramatically cut and the funding was put into the NDIS. In 2022, the National Mental Health Agreement was actually signed off by all Commonwealth, State and Territory Health Ministers. This was a really positive move. The problem is the action is not actually being taken and it is completely unacceptable."

"In 2024, the major Unmet Needs Report estimated a massive 230,500 people with severe mental health challenges were totally missing out on community supports and this gap jumps dramatically to one million people when you factor in the family carers. The scale of the issue is huge."

Tony Stevenson says it is disturbing to see years after numerous agreements have been made, there's still no cost sharing arrangement; service model for individuals; service model for carers and how the services will actually be staffed.

Tony Stevenson said, "Time is well and truly up. Key decision makers have had more than enough time to make decisions on the funding and how to make all this work in the community. We are three years into the term of the National Mental Health Agreement. Yet the parties haven't even agreed on a funding split."

The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia is highlighting that all governments need to start focusing on those with the most need when it comes to mental health challenges and their families.

MIFA demands the June Health Ministers meeting delivers:

1. A co-funding arrangement.

2. More community supports for individuals and families.
3. Lived Experience led co-design and co-decide of future community supports.
4. Commitment to close the community support gap by 2030.

The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia has a key not-for-profit network called Finding North which has become a growing community on the internet, to link people with mental health issues with others in a similar situation so they can share their experiences. To get more information, just go to www.findingnorth.org.au

**Media enquiries to Media Key on 03 9769 6488 or 0409 420 112
Tony Stevenson is available for media interviews**