



**NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH
CONSUMER & CARER FORUM**

NMHCCF Advocacy Brief

Issue: Mental Health Facts and Figures

Background

To equip consumers and carers with key facts and figures regarding mental health in Australia.

Key Points for Consumers and Carers

- One in five Australians will experience a mental illness in any year (Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2007*)
- One in four Australians under 25 years will experience a mental illness in any year (Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2007*)
- Mental illness is a young person's disease – 75% of all mental illness manifests before the age of 25 years (McGorry, *Making Sense of Orygen Youth Health*, www.orygen.org.au)
- Mental illness is the leading cause of years lost due to disability – 24% of all years lost or around 330,000 years (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2008*)
- There is only one youth specific early intervention psychosis service in Australia – Orygen Youth Mental Health in Melbourne (McGorry, *Making Sense of Orygen Youth Health*, www.orygen.org.au)
- 65% of all people with a common mental illness (depression/anxiety etc) do not receive any treatment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2007*)
- Mental illness accounts for more than a third of all health costs for adults aged 15-44 years (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2008*)

- Mental illness represents a quarter of the burden of disability for all diseases but accounts for only around 8% of the total health budget (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2008*)
- There are over 20 million pharmaceutical prescriptions a year related to mental illness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2008*)
- Mental illness is the fourth most common reason for seeing a GP (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2008*)
- An average person with cancer, diabetes, stroke or coronary heart disease will stay four times longer in hospital if they also experience a mental illness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2008*)
- Australia still overwhelmingly depends on acute mental health care provided in a hospital. We spend around 7% of the national mental health budget on community (NGO) mental health services while New Zealand spends around 35% (MHCA, *Time for Service 2006*)
- Statistics on mental illness among the prison population are not collected nationally, but a 2003 NSW study found the twelve month prevalence of mental illness is 74% in the NSW prison population compared with 22% in the general community (T. Butler and S. Allnutt, *Mental Illness Among New South Wales Prisoners 2003*)
- Having a mental illness does not mean someone will be violent. It has been calculated that the lifetime risk of someone with an illness such as schizophrenia seriously harming or killing another person is just .005%. It is much more likely that someone with a mental illness will hurt themselves, or be hurt by someone else (Sane Australia, *Mental Illness and Violence 2008*)
- In Australia in 1998, the employed proportion of people with severe mental illness ranged from 16.3% for people with schizophrenia, to 21.1% for people with mixed psychotic disorders. In contrast, the rate of employment in healthy working age Australians was 73.8% (MHCA, *Let's Get to Work 2007*)
- In 1998, the employment rate for people with any mental illness was 29%. For all other disabilities, the rate was 53% (MHCA *Let's Get to Work 2007*)
- Australia is about half as successful as other OECD countries in finding employment for people with a mental illness (OECD, *Transforming Disability into Ability 2003*)
- A 2006 report for the Victorian Government estimated that mental illness led to about 4.7 million absentee days a year, of which 80% was due to mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. This equated to about a \$660

million yearly loss to the Victorian economy. This roughly equates to over 18 million absentee days Australia-wide (MHCA *Let's Get to Work 2007*)

Name of Nominated NMHCCF contact on this issue

Please contact NMHCCF Secretariat (details below)

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