



AFFIRM
THE AUSTRALIAN FOUNDATION FOR
MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Thursday 28th September
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA STATEMENT

Canberra community, schools and businesses *Glow to AFFIRM*

Canberrans are being urged to ‘glow in the dark’ for mental health research with the launch of the *Glow to AFFIRM* mental health week campaign, run by AFFIRM: The Australian Foundation for Mental Health Research. The ACT Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher, MLA will today official launch the campaign.

The *Glow to AFFIRM* campaign is supported by Canberra businesses, schools and community groups, and involves increasing awareness and fundraising for crucial research through the sale of lime green glow in the dark wristbands.

AFFIRM is concerned with the preventative action that can be taken to reduce mental health problems in young people, families and the wider community. AFFIRM supports research into the causes, early intervention and prevention of mental health problems in the community.

Professor Helen Christensen, AFFIRM board member and Director of the ANU Centre for Mental Health Research said the *Glow to AFFIRM* campaign was particularly important to encourage early intervention for people who are at risk of, or experiencing common mental health problems.

“The reality is that over 60% of people affected by mental health problems don’t seek or receive any professional help,” Professor Christensen said. “Quality research can lead to a greater understanding of how to effectively treat and prevent common disorders, and increase options for early intervention. For example our innovative websites moodgym.anu.edu.au and bluepages.anu.edu.au have been shown to effectively reduce the symptoms of depression in users, and are accessed free of charge and anonymously by hundreds of thousands of users around the world.”

Campaign committee chair Ms Susie Beaver is thrilled at the response from local businesses. “We’re really impressed at the willingness of the business community to acknowledge the importance of mental health and to support this Canberra initiative,” Ms Beaver said. “We need to take proactive stance – clearly prevention and early intervention avoids escalation later”.

“Given the huge economic and social impact of mental health problems, this is obviously just the beginning. Next year we hope to expand our campaign around Australia, so that together as a community we can help to fund much needed research.”

AFFIRM welcomes enquiries from business or community groups who are interested in selling wristbands as part of the *Glow to AFFIRM* initiative. Please contact Wendy Preller on 6125 1031 for more information.

For further information:

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