
21 July 2010 Media statement

Major church groups seek action on community mental health

Major church groups providing social services in Australia; Anglicare Australia, Catholic Social Services Australia, The Salvation Army and UnitingCare Australia, today called on major parties to commit to an immediate and substantial increase in investment in community mental health.

“We are looking to Australia’s political parties to commit to immediate action on mental health – building on the [recommendations](#) of the NHHRC, by funding community mental health services that support participation, inclusion and recovery – and to work with consumers, services and health professionals in putting that plan in place” said Anglicare Australia acting Chair Ian Carter.

“Many people now understand that prevention and early intervention can make a real difference for young people experiencing their first episodes of mental illness. In the social service sector, we see that early intervention, prevention and recovery support can also make a real difference to people living with the effects of longer term mental health problems and their families,” said Susan Helyar, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

“Successive governments have failed to invest in adequate community based mental health services. While many Australians see only a small part of that failure, as they try and assist a loved one, our agencies are overwhelmed each day with family breakdown, long term unemployment, homelessness and suicide that could be avoided if governments would just engage with community based agencies” said Frank Quinlan, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia

Major Cecil Woodward, The Salvation Army Territorial Social Services Director, added “If the major parties are serious about dealing with homelessness and workforce participation, they need to commit to ways of implementing early mental health interventions and ongoing recovery supports that will ensure that those who experience mental illness can avoid the additional trauma of losing their job, their housing and/or their family and community connections.”

Across Australia these collective agencies have thousands of employees and volunteers, social workers, youth workers, community workers and carers who are serving millions of Australians each year and are eager to be part of a coordinated, long term national response.

Ian Carter
Acting Chair
Anglicare
Australia

Frank Quinlan
Executive Director
Catholic Social
Services Australia

Susan Helyar
National Director
UnitingCare
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