

MEDIA RELEASE

Organisations coming together to stop stigma

16 February 2018

People living with mental illness often experience stigma that prevents them from seeking the help and advice they need. These statistics are alarming, given that 50 per cent of Australians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and one in five will need to take time away from work.

Murray PHN created the [Stop Mental Illness Stigma Charter](#) to help workplaces understand and develop supports that value employees and customers experiencing mental illness. More than 50 organisations have now signed up to the charter, making workplaces safer across our region and Australia.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said that the most important thing to any organisation is its people. He believes that helping staff to be the best they can, both physically and mentally “is an investment worth making in any workplace”.

“People should be celebrated for their differences and not defined by them,” he said. “Too often people experiencing mental illness are labelled by their diagnoses, rather than being seen as people who also happen to have a mental illness,” Mr Jones said.

Murray PHN’s focus on consumer-led and co-designed projects means that people with mental illness are involved in the planning, designing and commissioning of health programs and services.

This month, Murray PHN is hosting Stop Stigma workshops in Bendigo, Mildura, Shepparton and Albury to hear from individuals and organisations committed to stopping mental health stigma in their communities.

In Bendigo on Monday, more than 15 local organisations are coming together for the first time, to share ideas on what has and what can be done in workplaces across Central Victoria.

“This information will also be used to develop future resources,” Mr Jones said. “It is very moving to see something that we created being embraced by so many organisations. It goes to show how mental health is becoming accepted as a significant factor in creating a health workforce.”

For more information on the Charter: www.murrayphn.org.au/stopstigma

Workshop details

Monday 19 February

The Capital Banquet Room, 50 View Street Bendigo

Media are welcome to attend the morning session.

The best time for media to secure photos and interviews is at morning tea (10:35am).

Consumer advocate Ric Raftis will speak on the challenges of stigmatising language and the impact of media coverage in mental health.

The full agenda is attached.

Stop Stigma Workshop Program: Monday 19 February

**The Capital Banquet Room,
50 View Street Bendigo.**

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| 9.15 | Registration |
| 9.30 | Housekeeping, outline of workshop agenda
Melissa Knight Facilitator |
| 9.35 | Welcome. Murray PHN and the internal implementation of the Charter
Matt Jones Murray PHN CEO |
| 9.50 | An overview of the Charter
Jo Rasmussen Murray PHN Strategic Projects Coordinator |
| 10.05 | Reflections exercise Motivation and aspirations for signing the Charter
Melissa Knight Facilitator |
| 10.20 | Consumer perspective Using stigmatising languages, a media story case study
Rik Raftis |
| 10.35 | Morning tea |
| 10.50 | Workshop part 1 Stop Stigma Charter Commitments 1 – 3 |
| 11.15 | Workshop part 2 Stop Stigma Charter Commitments 4 – 7 |
| 11.40 | Workshop part 3 Share our ideas |
| 12.00 | Summary and evaluations |
| 12.15 | Close |

Contact details

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