

MEDIA RELEASE

Organisations coming together to stop stigma

19 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 Mildura tomorrow, more than 12 local organisations are coming together for the first time, to share ideas on what has and what can be done in workplaces across North West 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

Tuesday 20 February

Alfred Deakin Centre, Benetook Room, 180-190 Deakin Avenue, Mildura

Media are welcome to attend the morning session.

The best time for media to secure photos and interviews is at morning tea (10:50am).

Consumer advocate Harry Schlegel is happy to share his personal story with the media.

The full agenda is attached.

Stop Stigma Workshop Program: Tuesday 20 February

**Alfred Deakin Centre, Benetook Room,
180-190 Deakin Avenue, Mildura**

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| 9.15 | Registration |
| 9.30 | Welcome
Merryl Whyte PHN Facilitator |
| 9.50 | Murray PHN perspectives on the Stop Stigma Charter
Jodie Rasmussen Murray PHN Strategic Projects Coordinator |
| 10.05 | Consumer perspectives
Harry Schlegel |
| 10.30 | Workshop part 1 Charter implementation |
| 10.50 | Morning tea |
| 11.10 | Workshop part 2 Charter implementation |
| 11.40 | Summary and evaluation |
| 12.15 | Close |

Contact details

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