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World Mental Health Day – A reminder that this is about people

On World Mental Health Day, Kerry Hawkins, Vice President Community Mental Health Australia has asked for governments, agencies and anyone involved in mental health to remember who this is about – people living with a mental illness and psychosocial disability.

“Every year on World Mental Health Day we take the time to focus on mental health and the various issues that impact people living with a mental illness. This can be about stigma, employment, homelessness or a range of other issues”.

“The most important factor for us to remember is that this is about people living with a mental illness and how everyone – whether that is government, service providers, organisations or the community – directs efforts on policy, programs or anything else to develop approaches which enable people to recover and be contributing members of their community”, Ms Hawkins said.

“CMHA promotes the recovery of people living with a mental illness so that they are contributing citizens and included in all of the economic and social aspects of their community. A recovery-based approach to mental illness – built on years of work and evidence-based good practice – is what we know works and where the person, their family, loved ones and carers, are at the centre of what is done”.

“At a time when community managed mental health is going through significant changes, in particular being impacted by the NDIS, we must remember that we aren’t dealing with line items on a budget, we are dealing with often complex, high needs people. These people should get high quality, comprehensive support when and where they need it”, Ms Hawkins said.

“Community Mental Health Australia and the community managed mental health sector stands willing to work with government at all levels to make sure the various changes that are happening work, but they must listen to us. We do not want to see mental health go backwards or to lose the expertise in our sector that we have worked hard to develop. Again, this should be about what is best for the person living with a mental illness or psychosocial disability and not the bottom line of a budget.”

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