

Media Release

New report highlights need for government support for informal mental health carers

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) is calling on the Territory and Federal Government to protect existing supports for mental health carers, following the release of a major new report showing informal mental health carers are contributing \$13.2 billion annually caring for people with mental illness, 1.7 times more than government investment in mental health services nationally.

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) will be launching a report today at Parliament House titled *The Economic Value of Informal Mental Health Caring in Australia*. Commissioned by Mind Australia, the Queensland University report is a national first, which demonstrates the need for government to ensure current support stays in place and funding increases for informal mental health carers.

The report reveals for the first time the significant scope and economic value of informal mental health caring in Australia. Detailing the amount and types of work these carers do, the report found.

- An estimated 240,000 Australians care for an adult with mental illness
- The majority of informal mental health carers are working age females
- A substantial proportion of mental health carers are young people, under the age of 25 - at 14.7 percent
- It would cost the government \$13.2 billion to replace informal mental health care with formal support - 1.7 times the current national expenditure on all mental health-related services in Australia

The NDIS will be rolled out in Darwin and Alice Springs in 2018 and will under the current modelling create large gaps in support for people caring for someone with a mental illness.

Nationally around 226,000 people with serious mental health issues may no longer be eligible for support they currently receive and we are deeply concerned that the burden of this shortfall will fall back on informal carers and their families. On top of this, another 90,000 informal carers could lose access to vital support that currently helps them in their caring role and prevents them burning out, due to current funding for support being transferred to the NDIS.

In light of the report, Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) are calling for governments to recognise the significant value of informal mental health carers in Australia and sustain existing supports for mental health carers

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT)

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) has been providing support for people with a mental illness, their families and carers for over 30 years. Our services operate in the Top End and Central Australia.

Mental Health Carers Australia

Mental Health Carers Australia (MHCA) is a member based national organisation representing people who support and/or care for a person with a mental illness of which Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) is the NT member.

Mind Australia

Mind Australia is a member of Mental Health Carers Australia and is a leading non-government provider of community mental health and psychosocial disability support services, with over 60 sites. Last year Mind provided support to almost 12,000 people and took close to 3000 calls from carers to the Mind Carer Helpline.

***The full report will be available [HERE](#) on Mind Australia's website on 23 March 2017
For interviews call 89481051***