

Media Release



The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc. is a non-profit, community based organisation that is committed to improving the circumstances and welfare of people living with mental illness, their relatives and carers, and professionals working in the area

For immediate release

7 October 2008

New program comes to Ryde to support people with Mental Illness

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc. is launching a new mental health program to support the community of Ryde and surrounding areas.

'The Hut', on the grounds of Macquarie Hospital in North Ryde will be home to the *Support for Day to Day Living in the Community Program (D2DL)* which aims to improve the quality of life for people whose lives are severely affected by mental illness.

The *Ryde Support for Day to Day Living in the Community* program will be officially opened by the Hon. Tony Abbott MP and The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP during Mental Health Week 2008.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc (SFNSW) has been chosen to develop this program in the Ryde area based on its long history of innovative programs that support people with mental illness and their carers, family and friends. The program focuses on the individual's strengths – what people can do, rather than what they can't do. It also focuses on recovery, demonstrating that people with mental illness can lead a fulfilled life in the community with the same opportunities as other people.

"The Day to Day Living Program funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, marks a new era in assisting people with a mental illness on their recovery journeys", said SFNSW CEO Rob Ramjan.

"D2DL provides one of the basic building blocks for people with a mental illness who are isolated, without assistance and often without hope," he added.

"The Fellowship knows from years of experience in providing programs such as Pioneer Clubhouse at Balgowlah that people with a mental illness can recover, can return to work, can be valuable contributing members of our community, and these are the goals of the D2DL program in Ryde."

The *Support for Day to Day Living in the Community* program will focus on providing social, recreational and educational opportunities and people attending will help develop a monthly program to suit their needs. By doing so, the program gives individuals with mental illness an opportunity to engage in significant daytime activity, improve self confidence, learn new skills and integrate back into the community.

This program is holistically designed to provide what is often essential support for those individuals who feel isolated and stigmatised, and who may also be struggling to rejoin the community after hospitalisation. Individuals who participate in the Program are often looking for education, self-improvement and a sense of belonging. Many individuals transition out of the program and into employment opportunities.

Non-government organisations have a proud history of co-operation to benefit the people they serve. SFNSW is no exception and at the Hut, will be working closely with established community groups and Macquarie Hospital to achieve this, thus providing a greater level of care for those living in the Ryde community with a mental illness.

An Open day for all public will coincide with the official launch and will be held on Thursday 9 October 2008 at 'The Hut' 104 Badajoz Road, North Ryde at 11am-2pm.

Ends

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