



MEDIA RELEASE

09 May 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Physical health of people affected by mental illness topic of national discussion

On Saturday 21 May Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc will partner with Mental Illness Fellowship Australia (MIFA) to hold a live and interactive national web broadcast to discuss physical health and people affected by mental illness.

The web broadcast starts at 15:00 EST (AUS), Saturday 21 May and in Sydney will occur as part of Schizophrenia Fellowships annual Schizophrenia Awareness Week Symposium which will be held at the Masonic Centre in central Sydney.

Facilitated by Julie McCrossin, the web broadcast will include:

- Discussions on the latest evidence about the health of people living with a mental illness and what we need to do about it
- Hearing personal stories from consumers, carers and service providers about the challenges of building good physical health and how to overcome these challenges
- Identifying practical methods we can all use to improve the physical health of people with a mental illness.

“People with mental illness have a life expectancy approximately 20 years less than that of the general population, having a forum like this will allow robust national discussion to take place to help identify what on a practical level we can all do to improve this unacceptable statistic.” Said Rob Ramjan AM, CEO Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW and one of the speakers for the broadcast.

“According to Diabetes Australia the estimate for type 2 diabetes amongst the Australian population in 2010 was about 9% (Obesity and Life Study (AusDiab) released April 2001), the Indigenous population has an uncertain rate of between 10 and 30%, and yet people with schizophrenia have rates of 25 to 39%, the highest rate identified in this country. Our governments offer no programs to address this obscenity. People with mental illness are also more likely to experience heart disease and stroke. This forum will discuss ways to put an end to these horrific figures”, Mr Ramjan concluded.

Release Ends

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 additional media information or to arrange an interview please contact
Te Raehira Wihapi, Communications Officer 9879-2600