



SENATOR THE HON BRETT MASON

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

20 September 2007

BM46/07

NEW MENTAL HEALTH WEB SITE LAUNCHED

The Australian Government has launched a comprehensive web site that provides up-to-date information on mental health and wellbeing, including information on the Government's mental health programs.

"The new site, www.mentalhealth.gov.au, is a one-stop shop of all Government programs aimed at reforming and improving our mental health care system," the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Brett Mason, said.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing web site provides important information on Government health programs, funding opportunities, publications, and policies. For example, it includes information updates on a range of initiatives, such as the Better Access and the Personal Helpers and Mentors programs.

The website is the result of collaboration between the Departments of Health and Ageing; Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Education, Science and Training; Employment and Workplace Relations; and Veterans' Affairs.

"This is the first time that information about the Australian Government's mental health reform activities, including services for veterans, has been consolidated and presented in one easily accessible place," the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Bruce Billson, said.

The Minister for Workforce Participation, Dr Sharman Stone, said the Government was committed to improving employment prospects and opportunities for people with mental illness.

"The variety of support offered is as diverse as the population – from pre-employment assistance with life skills; to support in finding and retaining sustainable employment; to providing support to employers," Dr Stone said.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Pat Farmer, emphasised the importance of tackling the barriers people with mental illness face.

"In relation to education, this can prevent them from full participation. They require support to help them achieve their full potential, and to develop both personally and professionally," Mr Farmer said.

The Minister for Community Services, Senator Nigel Scullion, agreed, saying that the Government's mental health programs are increasing the level of social support and community based care.

"This is making a big difference for people whose lives are affected by severe mental illness, and their families and carers," Senator Scullion said.

The Australian Government has made the largest ever commitment to the mental health sector with more than \$1.9 billion invested over five years from 2006. It builds on and strengthens programs that the Australian Government has introduced since the commencement of the National Mental Health Strategy in 1992.

Media contact: Senator Mason's office - Carolyn Martin 0423 826 768