MEDIA RELEASE

Mental Health Nurses enhancing practice and optimising recovery at ACMHN 2017 Conference

The 43rd International Mental Health Nursing Conference has attracted over 400 delegates across Australia and internationally to come together in Hobart to discuss, debate and explore ways of ‘enhancing practice and optimising recovery.’

Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan, CEO of Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) said that “it is inspiring to see many who are committed to improving the mental health of the community come together at this conference.”

This year we have seen highly politicised and scrutinised discussions taking place about numerous sensitive issues, such as marriage equality, refugee policy and deaths in mental health units, and the impacts these have on people’s mental health.

With the life expectancy for people who have serious mental illness can be up to 25 years lesser than the general population - mental health reform is happening around the world, and mental health nurses will be central to the changes.

“Internationally, there is an increasing focus on primary care delivery, the management of chronic disease, and the life expectancy gap of people with serious mental illness, Australia is no different,” Ms Ryan said.

Australia has unacceptable levels of Indigenous suicide, high suicide rates among men over 85, and an average of eight people committing suicide a day.

“To address these health statistics, we need to expand the roles and opportunities of mental health nurses and other nurses to enhance their practice around mental health so they can capably and confidently support consumer and carers on the road to recovery,” Ms Ryan said.

The ACMHN strongly advocates for a nursing workforce that is responsive to the mental health needs across healthcare settings, cultural groups, spectrum of illness and lifespan.

“This year’s International Conference in Hobart provides a platform for the mental health nursing profession to come together explore how we can listen to the latest research, explore new and innovative practice, debate and discuss how mental health nurses can be the change we want to see,” said Ms Ryan.

At the Conference, ACMHN will be announcing the findings from a ground breaking research project funded by the National Mental Health Commission around seclusion and restraint practices in mental health settings.

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Available for interview or comment ACMHN CEO Adjunct Professor Kim Ryan

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