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MEDIA STATEMENT

Joint winners of the 2017 Australian Mental Health Prize

Last night Minister Greg Hunt announced the joint winners of the 2017 Australian Mental Health Prize.

The prize was first established by University of New South Wales, through its School of Psychiatry, by Scientia Professor Philip Mitchell, Head of the School of Psychiatry. The Prize recognises people who have made outstanding contributions to mental health.

Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan, chief executive of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses who is the recipient of the award in 2016 said, “both winners have made a very significant contribution to the mental health of the community.”

For 37 years, Janet Meagher has been championing the rights of people with mental illness, the whole time that she has been living with schizophrenia.

“Janet has always kept us honest about our conversations around mental health and reminds us that consumers are at the centre of all we do”, said Ms Ryan.

Professor Allan Fels maybe well-known to many as the Chair of the National Mental Health Commission, however, his work in establishing The Haven Foundation deserves the same recognition.

The Haven Foundation is a specialist accommodation in South Yarra, Melbourne, which helps provide long-term affordable accommodation, support and care for people living with severe and persistent mental illness.

Allan’s daughter was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 25, which provides him with an insight to the gaps that exist in the delivery of mental health care services from a consumer and carer perspective.

Ms Ryan said, “I am thrilled for both Janet and Allan in receiving the 2017 Prize as they are both supremely worth of such recognition”.

“It was a wonderful evening and everyone was very pleased for them”.

The ACMHN would like to recognise all 2017 nominees who are very worthy recipients.

All nominees should be proud of all the positive contributions they are making to the lives of people living with mental illness.