



## A special election edition of *Engage*

We've kept *Engage* brief to bring you some results from our **Australia Talks Mental Illness 2007** survey which was undertaken earlier this year along with the **Call to Action** which targets members of Federal Parliament.

The survey was distributed to all member organisations of MIFA and made available to the public through our website. More than 2000 people responded making it the largest survey of its kind. The survey focused on areas of Commonwealth government responsibility with the intent of using the results to inform the government of the top five issues for people affected by mental illness, their families, carers and loved ones.

This *Engage* is being sent to all federal Members of Parliament along with the results of the survey. MIFA will seek the

position of the main political parties on the issues raised by the survey and articulated in the enclosed Call to Action. Members of Parliament can expect questions and visits from people affected by mental illness in the weeks leading up to the election asking what their party intends to put in place to improve services.

Health has been making headlines in the media and the subject is clearly something that Australians are passionate about. Those of us directly affected by mental illness and those working to reduce its impact are particularly passionate about the need for change to Australia's mental health sector. We know however that it is not just the mental health sector that needs change. Change is also needed in those other sectors, managed by government, that have responsibility to assist people in need.

For example at a federal level there are a number of departments, each headed by a minister, that have a direct impact on the wellbeing of someone with a mental illness. Evidence now tells us that when someone with a mental illness obtains a job the rate of relapse reduces, self-esteem is greatly enhanced and the ability to contribute to the community relieves the feeling of isolation so commonly experienced. Research also tells us that as many as 50% of people with psychotic disorders are able to work, provided the right support programs are in place. In Australia, 80% of people with psychotic disorders receive the disability support pension. Australia can do better than that!

Some of the federal departments with a direct responsibility for the wellbeing of people affected by mental illness are listed below along with the lead statement from the respective websites, the minister/s responsible for the portfolio and the website address for further information.

Australians Talk Mental Illness 2007 is truly democracy in action. We are calling government to account and challenging other parties to state their intent. Now it's over to you. We want everyone who completed the survey to take the next step and campaign in the lead up to the federal election. The Call to Action explains how. Visit [www.mifellowshipaustralia.org](http://www.mifellowshipaustralia.org) for online survey results and to subscribe to our **new email newsletter** – it's private, free, keeps you up to date and you can unsubscribe anytime you want.

### *The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA)*

FaCSIA is responsible for social policies and support affecting Australian society and the living standards of Australian families. FaCSIA is the Australian Government's principal source of advice on social policy and is responsible for about a quarter of the government's budgetary outlays. *Source: [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)*

Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs:  
The Hon Mal Brough MP  
Minister for Community Affairs:  
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion

*continued overleaf*



### **The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)**

DEWR provides the government with high quality advice, programmes and services to achieve three outcomes:

- Efficient and effective labour market assistance
- Higher productivity,
- Increased workforce participation

Source: [www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)

Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations: The Hon Joe Hockey MP  
Minister for Workplace Participation:

The Hon Sharman Stone MP

### **The Department of Human Services**

Human Services is about people – and the services we may need at different stages of our lives. Through the minister, the department and the portfolio agencies, the government aims to ensure that how a service is delivered is always considered when new policies are developed.

Source: [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

Minister for Human Services:  
Senator the Hon Chris Ellison

### **The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA)**

Better health and active ageing for all Australians.

Source: [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

Minister for Health and Ageing:  
The Hon Tony Abbott MHR

Minister for Ageing:

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP  
Parliamentary Secretary

to the Minister for Health and Ageing:

Senator the Hon Brett Mason 

### **Parliamentary Friends of Schizophrenia**

Hon Tony Abbott MP  
Senator the Hon Eric Abetz  
Hon Dick Adams MP  
Senator Judith Adams  
Senator Lyn Allison  
Mr Kerry Bartlett MP  
Senator Cory Bernardi  
Hon Arch Bevis MP  
Hon Bruce Billson MP  
Ms Sharon Bird MP  
Mr Anthony Byrne MP  
Hon Alan Cadman MP  
Senator Paul Calvert  
Senator Ian Campbell  
Hon Ian Causley MP  
Senator Grant Chapman  
Mr John Cobb MP  
Ms Ann Corcoran MP  
Mr Michael Danby MP

Mrs Trish Draper MP  
Ms Annette Ellis MP  
Mrs Justine Elliot MP  
Mrs Kay Elson MP  
Mr Pat Farmer MP  
Mr Laurie Ferguson MP  
Mr Michael Ferguson MP  
Senator Jeannie Ferris  
Senator Michael Forshaw  
Hon Teresa Gambaro MP  
Mr Peter Garrett MP  
Mrs Joanna Gash MP  
Mr Steve Georganas MP  
Ms Julia Gillard MP  
Ms Sharon Grierson MP  
Mr Alan Griffin MP  
Ms Jill Hall MP  
Mr Chris Hayes MP  
Ms Kelly Hoare MP  
Mrs Kay Hull MP  
Senator Gary Humphries  
Mr Dennis Jensen MP

Mr Michael Johnson MP  
Hon De-Anne Kelly MP  
Hon Jackie Kelly MP  
Hon Duncan Kerr MP  
Ms Catherine King MP  
Senator Linda Kirk  
Dr Andrew Laming MP  
Senator Kate Lundy  
Senator the Hon Brett Mason  
Senator Anne McEwen  
Senator Jan McLucas  
Senator Christine Milne  
Senator Claire Moore  
Hon Brendan Nelson MP  
Ms Sophie Mirabella MP  
Ms Julie Owens MP  
Ms Sophie Panopoulos MP  
Senator Kay Patterson  
Senator Marise Payne  
Senator Helen Polley  
Hon Christopher Pyne MP  
Senator Michael Ronaldson

Mr Kevin Rudd MP  
Senator the Hon Santo Santoro  
Mr Rodney Sawford MP  
Senator Rachel Siewert  
Dr Andrew Southcott MP  
Senator Ursula Stephens  
Senator Glenn Sterle  
Hon Sharman Stone MP  
Mr Wayne Swan MP  
Mr Lindsay Tanner MP  
Mr Ken Ticehurst MP  
Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP  
Senator Ruth Webber  
Senator Penny Wong  
Senator Dana Wortley

*To join PFS contact the office of Senator Ursula Stephens or Dr Andrew Southcott MP.*

### **Contact information**

For more information visit [www.mifa.org.au](http://www.mifa.org.au) or contact your local branch.

ARAFMI Tasmania  
Telephone 03 6331 4486  
Email [arafmi@intas.net.au](mailto:arafmi@intas.net.au)

Mental Illness Fellowship of North Queensland Inc  
Telephone 07 4725 3664  
[www.mifnq.org.au](http://www.mifnq.org.au)

Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria  
Telephone 03 8486 4200

[www.mifellowship.org](http://www.mifellowship.org)

Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia Inc  
Telephone 08 8221 5160  
[www.mifsa.org.au](http://www.mifsa.org.au)

Mental Illness Fellowship of Western Australia Inc  
Telephone 08 9228 0200  
[www.mifwa.com](http://www.mifwa.com)

Mental Illness Fellowship of the ACT Inc  
Telephone 02 6205 2021  
[www.mifact.org.au](http://www.mifact.org.au)

Schizophrenia Fellowship of New South Wales Inc

Telephone 02 9879 2600  
[www.sfnsw.org.au](http://www.sfnsw.org.au)

Schizophrenia Fellowship of Queensland Inc  
Telephone 07 3358 4424  
[www.sfq.org.au](http://www.sfq.org.au)

Mental Health Carers Northern Territory  
Telephone 08 8948 1051  
[www.ntarafmi.org.au](http://www.ntarafmi.org.au)

### **Engage Online**

The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia is a not-for-profit national organisation dedicated

to ensuring that all Australians affected by mental illness receive adequate services and that policy and legislation address those needs.

To access this and previous PDF versions of *Engage*, visit: [www.mifa.org.au](http://www.mifa.org.au)

MIFA does not necessarily endorse the views of those quoted in this newsletter, but we recognise the importance of their commentary and ideas in the debate about mental illness.