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Equally Well

NEWSLETTER

Issue 1, December 2017

<https://equallywell.org.au/>

Welcome!

Welcome to the first newsletter of Equally Well Australia! Since the launch of Equally Well on 25 July 2017 there has been much interest in what is Equally Well, how to get involved in the campaign and how to sign up to demonstrate your commitment to the Equally Well declaration. This newsletter will answer these questions, introduce you to the national implementation committee and the project team, and highlight some of the key activities.

What is Equally Well?

Equally Well has been established by the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) and supported by Mental Health Australia. *Equally Well* represents the collaborative outcome of the consensus reached by all jurisdictional governments, professional colleges, peak bodies, social and community services and other leaders in mental health calling for better collaboration and coordination to make the physical health of people living with mental illness a national priority. This collaboration will ultimately improve the sharing and utilisation of resources and promote shared action to advocate for equal access to quality health care.

Did you know?

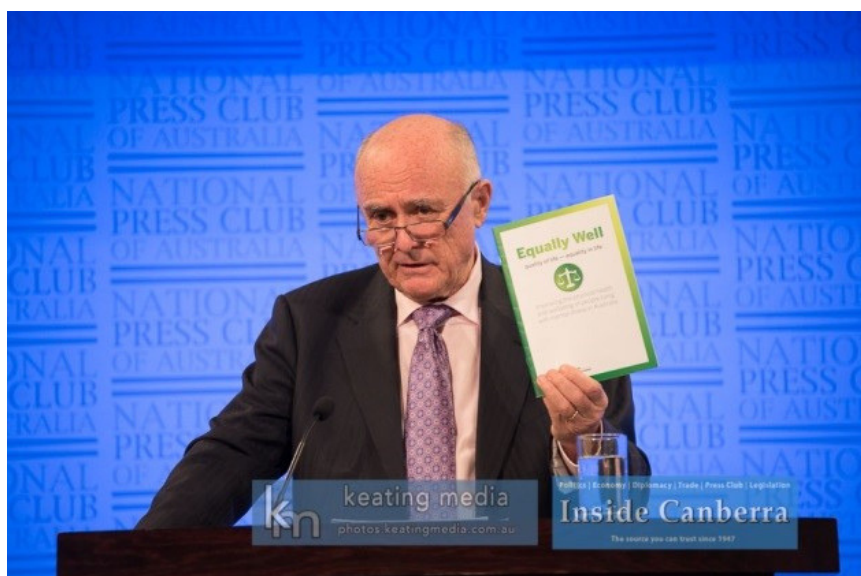


- People with a serious mental illness die, on average, 20 years earlier than the rest of the population, the majority from preventable causes such as heart disease and respiratory disease.
- 80% of people living with a mental illness have a mortality related physical illness.

Quality of life - Equality in life

The Equally Well launch

The *Equally Well* initiative was launched on 25 July 2017 by the Co-Chair of the NMHC, Professor Allan Fels, AO, at the National Press Club in Canberra. Along with the **Equally Well National Consensus Statement**, Professor Fels announced the establishment of a national committee to oversee and coordinate the implementation of *Equally Well* – the Equally Well Implementation Committee (EWIC).



Professor Allan Fels, AO launching *Equally Well*

The EWIC is Co-Chaired by Elida Meadows (Mental Health Council of Tasmania) and Associate Professor Russell Roberts (Charles Sturt University) and comprises representatives from across jurisdictions and mental health, to oversee and drive change. The membership of the EWIC can be viewed **here**. The EWIC has met three times in 2017 to prioritise actions and develop a strategy for the implementation and governance of Equally Well in Australia.

Equally Well

Improving the physical health and wellbeing of people living with mental illness in Australia

National Consensus Statement

Our vision is to improve the quality of life of people living with mental illness by providing equity of access to quality health care, with the ultimate aim of bridging the life expectancy gap between people living with mental illness and the general population.

We commit to making the physical health of people living with mental illness a priority at all levels: national, state, territory and regional.

We commit to bringing the importance of physical wellbeing across the spectrum of health – from promotion and prevention to treatment – for people of all ages across our whole society to public attention, to spur change.

We commit to partnering with consumers and carers, service providers, planners, policy makers and funders, to achieve our vision.

We will improve the physical health of people living with mental illness by acting to deliver:

1. a holistic, person-centred approach to physical and mental health and wellbeing
2. effective promotion, prevention and early intervention
3. equity of access to all services
4. improved quality of health care
5. care coordination and regional integration across health, mental health and other services and sectors which enable a contributing life
6. the monitoring of progress towards improved physical health and wellbeing.

We call on organisations across Australia to pledge support for this change.

To pledge to this Consensus Statement please go to www.equallywell.org.au



Elida Meadows, Co-Chair EWIC



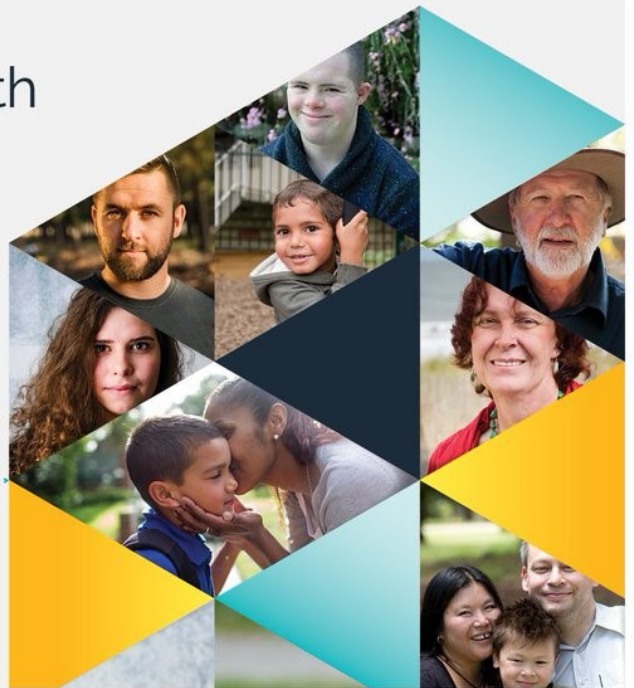
A/Prof Russell Roberts, Co-Chair EWIC

Equally Well in the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan

Equally Well has been enthusiastically welcomed across the sector, and so far over 70 national, state and local organisations have pledged their support. In the recently endorsed **Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan**, governments committed to *Equally Well* within Priority Area 5: Improving the physical health of people living with mental illness and reducing early mortality.

The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan

national
mental
health
strategy



Promoting *Equally Well*

Since the establishment of the EWIC, conference presentations and briefings have been conducted at:

- The International Mental Health Conference
- The National Rural and Remote Mental Health Symposium
- The National meeting of Rural Primary Health Network Chief Executives
- NSW Older Persons Mental Health Forum

*Copies of these presentations are available on the **Equally Well website**.*



<http://www.emergingrnleader.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/presentations.jpg>

The Equally Well project team

The EWIC are supported by the *Equally Well* Project Team. To date, the Project Team has:

- Identified existing resources available across the mental health and health sectors;
- Developed a social media and communication plan which will see a re-launch of the website and the launch of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In, and You Tube profiles in February 2018;
- Established a database of *Equally Well* supporters, contacts and stakeholders; and
- Commenced an audit of initiatives across sectors to identify gaps in available resources and areas of strength.

Curating Resources

We are building a repository of resources dedicated to improving the physical health of people with mental illness. These are targeted at a range of stakeholders including consumers, carers and healthcare and other professionals. Resources range from fact sheets and reports, to tools used for advocacy in promoting conversations between a consumer and a healthcare practitioner, and will also include video, and downloadable health prompts and diaries.

Consulting with consumers and carers

Representatives from the EWIC have workshopped with the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum in Adelaide in October 2017. The results of this consultation will soon be placed on the *Equally Well* website. The aim of the consultation was to collaborate with consumers and carers to identify resources and tools that are useful and user-friendly. The consultation was incredibly valuable in informing the EWIC's communication strategy to ensure that consumers, carers and support people are able to access the information they need in an accessible way.



L-R: Dr Michael Mehmet, A/Prof Russell Roberts, Dr Sarah Hyde, Ms Lee Cobb, A/Prof Oliver Burmeister, Mr Scott Banks



National Mental Health
Consumer & Carer Forum

Useful Resources

A sample of resources you may find useful are described below and can also be found on our **webpage** (<http://equallywell.org.au>).

For *consumers*, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrist's, **Your Health in Mind, Physical Health and Mental Illness** resource provides a four page summary of the importance of looking after your physical health. It encourages you to have a physical health check every year and provides useful information and links to further resources to start small, changing just one or two things which can begin to improve your physical health.

The health and well being of *carers* is paramount in helping to improve the physical health of people living with a mental illness. The **Carer Gateway** provides a great range of tips and tools to ensure carers maintain their own physical health through the importance of sleep, respite, smoking cessation, and strategies to cope with stress.

Additionally, the **Way Ahead** - Mental Health Association NSW provides a useful fact sheet on physical activity and health with recommendations about physical activity and healthy living and how to incorporate more activity into daily life.

Evidence-based reports

There are several evidence based reports available on the *Equally Well* website including the **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing** Evidence guide produced by the NSW Mental Health Commission which provides summaries of evidence surrounding strategies to improve physical health, assist with smoking cessation, improve diet and oral health as examples.

The **Keeping Body and Mind Together** report by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists provides evidence and indicators surrounding the higher prevalence of physical illness in people living with mental illness, examines the barriers to healthcare and what can be done to remove those barriers.



Ways to get involved with Equally Well

To sign up to *Equally Well* and have your organisation's logo displayed on our webpage, please email **signup@equallywell.org.au** with the name of your organisation, logo, link to your home page, and confirmation that you have the authority to give formal commitment.

If you are effecting change and promoting the physical health of people living with mental illness, please email the **Project Team** and share your good news stories and experiences so that we can promote them on our website.

All supporters will shortly receive an email from A/Prof Russell Roberts seeking your support and collaboration in sharing resources and identifying key initiatives to enhance the physical health of people living with mental illness – please watch out for that email and the attached audit tool which we are using to collate best practice and resources to disseminate with permission on the Equally Well website. If you don't receive an email and would like to participate in this process, please **contact us**.

In 2018, *Equally Well* will be promoted on various social media channels. We will advise supporters of the relevant hashtags and handles to use in regard to this. If you have content you would like to share or hashtags for us to include please **email us!**

Thanks for your interest in & support of Equally Well!

<https://equallywell.org.au/>
signup@equallywell.org.au

Sign up!

Share your activity!

Share resources!

Engage on social media!



Equally Well

quality of life — equality in life