

#EquallyWellAu22

## Saving lives through better collaboration a focus at 2022 Equally Well symposium

MEDIA RELEASE

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- Over 30 people experiencing mental ill-health die every day from preventable physical illnesses
- 80% of people living with serious mental ill-health conditions live with a least one co-existing chronic physical health condition
- On average, people living with mental ill-health die 20 years earlier than the rest of the population (reference )

### **New research reveals prevention, screening, early identification and treatments are vital**

New research focussing on improving access to routine health screening for preventable health conditions for mental health consumers and their carers, will be launched at the Equally Well 2022 Symposium 12-13 April, living up to this year's theme, *Equally Well: Action and collaboration for hope and health*.

In partnership with Equally Well Australia, [Lived Experience Australia](#) conducted research on mental health consumers' and carers' experiences of physical health care in their contacts with GPs, allied health, NDIS and mental health professionals.

The report produced from this research, presents a national collective voice of consumers' and carers' experiences. It supports the health statistics that more people experiencing mental ill-health die from preventable physical conditions than die by suicide ([reference](#))

### **Symposium brings researchers, lived experience experts and mental health sector together to unite for action**

The *Review of Physical and Mental Health Care in Australia report* is one of over 70 presentations and workshops sharing innovative and inspirational stories that will feature research and best practice case studies from mental health researchers and services making real impacts onto improving the health and wellbeing of people living with mental illness.

Some of the success stories being shared in the program include:

- An Older Persons Mental Health State-wide Practice Improvement Project which is forging links across health services, GPs and NGOs
- WellMob: Social and Emotional Wellbeing Online Resources for Indigenous Communities
- Lifestyle cardiology for people with mental illness
- Visa status, physical activity and mental health refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers
- Led by the Mitchel Institute in partnership with Equally Well Australia, “Being Equally Well” project brought together 60 chronic care, primary care and mental health experts to identify priorities and develop a roadmap for reform
- Making an Impact on smoking for people with mental illness in contact with state public mental health services
- Global Call for Vaccine Equity (led by Equally Well Aust, NZ and UK and with support from 16 countries, the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the World Psychiatry Association) calling for vaccine equity for people living with mental illness.

A key aim of this symposium is to energise leaders to share, collaborate and amplify impact. Sharing knowledge, experiences of success and addressing challenges are all ways to achieve this goal of collective action for change.

National Director of Equally Well Australia and Professor of Management at [Charles Sturt University](#) Russell Roberts said Equally Well actions are saving lives and improving the wellbeing of people living with mental illness but that real impact and change only comes with a sense of shared responsibility.

*“We now have data showing 100’s of people living with mental illness have successfully completed smoking cessation plans. (Smoking kills 1 in 2 long-term smokers.)<sup>14, 15</sup> We have also countless anecdotal reports of people who have had long unrecognised chronic conditions diagnosed.*”

*“Australia is arguably one of the leading countries in the world in addressing this challenge. We have made significant progress, and generated good momentum. But we still have a long way to go to achieve our goal of people with mental illness becoming ‘equally well’.”*”

Experts from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and across Australia will share innovative practice and developments aimed to improve the physical health and wellbeing of people living with mental illness. The stories of experts by lived experience are a key feature of the program which aims to provide an opportunity for diverse perspectives and the chance to make new and lasting connections.

The international experience of Equally Well will include presentations from: David Castle, University of Toronto, Canada, about the role for peer workers in improving the physical health of people with mental health problems; Andy Bell, UK Centre for Mental Health (Equally Well UK) on the importance of rights and inclusion to

improving health; and Caro Swanson, Equally Well NZ talking about the consumer perspective.

Opening the conference will be The Hon David Coleman MP, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide followed by Ruth Vine, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Australian Government, Department of Health. Day two will be opened by Christine Morgan, from the National Mental Health Commission.

The Equally Well Symposium is a free event being held on the Gold Coast Campus of Griffith University supported by the generous donations of sponsors from across the mental health sector.

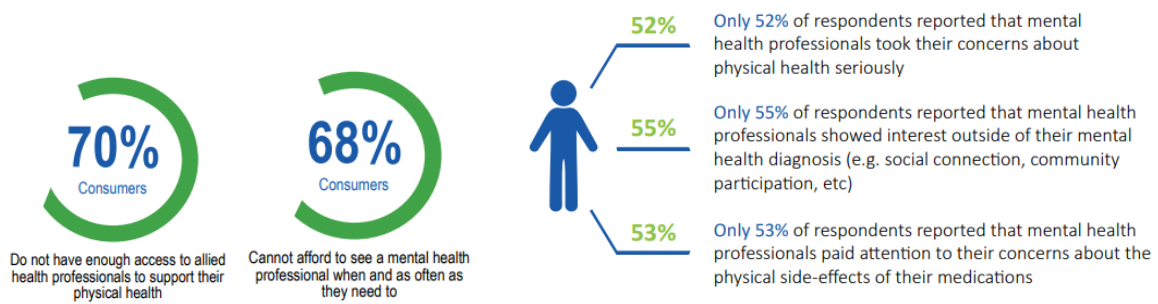


For a full preview of the program and speaker details visit the [Equally Well 2022 Symposium Website](#) or follow us on your socials [#EquallyWellAu22](#)

**Images: Lived Experience Australia.**



Data from the 2021 Review of Physical and Mental Health Care in Australia report by Lived Experience Australia Ltd and Equally Well Au.



## Media Notes:

### For interview about the 2022 Equally Well Symposium contact:

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## References and further information

To download copies of the full report or summary of key findings: Review of Physical and Mental Health Care in Australia report by Lived Experience Australia Ltd and Equally Well Au.

<https://www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/mhphmedia>

## Related Links

- [Productivity Commission. 2020. Mental Health Inquiry Report. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.](#)
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2017. Mortality of people using mental health services and prescription medications. Analysis of 2011 data. Canberra: ABS.](#)
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. National Health Survey: Mental health and coexisting physical health conditions, Australia, 2014-15. Canberra: ABS.](#)
- [Roberts, R., Lockett, H., Bagnall, C., Maylea, C. & Hopgood, M. 2018. Improving the physical health of people living with mental illness in Australia and New Zealand. Australian Journal of Rural Health, 26, 354-362.](#)