



### **Launch of Labor's Mental Health Policy**

VICSERV, the peak body representing community managed mental health services in Victoria welcomed the launch at the weekend of *Better Mental Health*, the Victorian Labor party's mental health policy going into the State election.

The increased focus on youth and early intervention is welcomed and supported by VICSERV. The addition of 3 adult PARCs and further development of the model for youth services is a positive step toward increased community care.

Ms Kim Koop, Chief Executive Officer of VICSERV has however expressed disappointment in relation to the lack of growth over recent years in the number of general support packages for adults living in the community.

"People living with mental illness fare much better when they have access to a range of support services - at home and work. We need to continue the Victorian trend of funding recovery support work in the community and not lose ground while we develop new approaches in the youth area," says Ms Koop.

Ms Koop adds, "More workers with knowledge of mental illness are required to provide active support to people in their recovery and in breaking down barriers posed by illness - PARC services will not fill the gap and must be complimented by community support and treatment.

Additionally, housing and employment support for people with mental illness must be part of the overall plan if we are serious about reducing the disadvantage people with mental illness experience day-to-day."

VICSERV's major research report [\*Pathways to social inclusion\*](#) proposes key investments in housing, reducing health inequalities, increasing economic participation and social inclusion for people with a mental illness and their families.

VICSERV fully supports member organisations, [Mind](#) and [Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria](#) recent articulated calls for action on these issues coming into the 2010 Victorian election.

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