

## MEDIA RELEASE

15 April 2024

### **Call for calm. Schizophrenia is not a cause but a condition that demands greater support without stigma and blame**

SANE, the national organisation representing Australians impacted by complex mental health is gravely concerned at the public speculation following the horrific incident and loss of lives at Bondi Junction on Saturday.

Placing the blame entirely on the perpetrators mental health status is not only inaccurate, it's distressing and harmful for those living with long term or complex mental health conditions.

People with schizophrenia are the most stigmatised in the media and despite clear evidence showing this community are far more likely to be the victims of violent crime, they are often automatically (and incorrectly) blamed by the media.

SANE CEO, Rachel Green is calling for collective calm and due process to be adopted.

"Persistent, negative portrayal of mental illness reinforces shame and reduces the likelihood that someone will seek help. It contributes to social isolation, poorer health outcomes and increased suicide risk."

"We've been inundated today with calls and emails from members of our community who are horrified to think they're seen in the same light as the person who has committed this terrible crime."

"We've also had numerous complaints about distressing or stigmatising media coverage made to our Stigmawatch program."

"The reality is, people living with complex mental health conditions are much more likely to be victims of violent crime, not the perpetrators."

"Whilst we don't know his motive, what is clear is that this person has experienced long term mental health challenges and has not had appropriate access to treatment or support."

"Effective early intervention and ongoing treatment and psychosocial support can prevent significant deterioration and enable people with complex mental ill health to live healthy, productive and meaningful lives."

"There is an enormous need for increased investment and better coordination of mental health services at a state and federal level. Our current mental health system is filled with gaps and people have and continue to fall through and sometimes with devastating consequences".

“We’re calling on governments to take action to ensure this situation doesn’t happen again.”

As the investigation into the Bondi Junction incident continues, we encourage all Australians to reduce unhelpful speculation about motive and learn a little more about what it means to live with a complex mental health condition.

We’d like extend our sincere sympathies to all those impacted by this dreadful situation and encourage anyone needing help to connect with one of the following services –

- SANE free support services for individuals with complex mental health needs and their friends and family can be accessed from [www.sane.org/get-support](http://www.sane.org/get-support) or via the SANE Supportline 1800 187 263.
- For crisis situations, please call
  - Lifeline 13 11 14
  - KidsHelpline – 1800 55 1800
  - 13 Yarn – 13 92 76

--ENDS--

- Please ensure you adhere to [Mindframe guidelines](#) when covering stories about mental health or suicide.
- SANE accredited phone and online services can be accessed [here](#).
- For interviews or more information, please contact [media@sane.org](mailto:media@sane.org) or 0407 958 920

#### About SANE

SANE is the leading national mental health organisation for people with persistent, recurring or complex mental health issues and trauma. It provides a range of free digital and telehealth services to support them and their families. Led by the voices of its community, SANE drives change to improve the lives of those living with complex mental health and end stigma and discrimination. Find out more at [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org).