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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STIGMA IN LANGUAGE A BARRIER TO RECOVERY

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) has today welcomed the release of Mindframe's latest resource for media professionals and journalists for reporting suicide and mental illness.

"This new resource from Mindframe is extremely valuable," Frank Quinlan, CEO of the MHCA said.

"Language can have a significant impact on how we think about an issue. We acknowledge that the language we use around mental health can impact people in a detrimental way. Casual misuse can actually act as a barrier to people seeking help, and impact their confidence in their recovery journey.

"We need to be talking more about mental health and mental illness, and the media play a critical role in facilitating this public discussion. We hope this guide will give the media the confidence they need to lead difficult discussions about issues that have been swept under the carpet.

"We have seen these impacts first hand. For too long mental illness has been open to ridicule and derision. The negative connotations found in everyday slang can, and does, creep into news reporting further exacerbating myths and misinformation about mental illness. That's why resources like these are so important.

"It's also encouraging to see the level of engagement from the Australian media in addressing this issue. Largely, the Australian media is considerate and careful around the reporting of suicide and mental illness; however we believe work still needs to be done surrounding the commentary of mental health issues when reporting about celebrities.

"De-stigmatizing the conversation around mental health is an important plank of our mission to create the best mental health system in the world. Resources like these are vital to helping us all recognise the impact of our words and how simple adjustments can change people's lives for the better."

The revised resources, developed through a national consultation exercise with media and mental health and suicide prevention sectors, include a new media book, quick reference cards, guide for journalism welfare and an updated website.

The resources can be found at <http://www.mindframe-media.info/home/resource-downloads#m>

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