



MEDIA RELEASE

Key Date: 9 October 2012

Historic meeting of non-government organisations influencing COAG plans for mental health

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Council of Non-Government Organisations (CONGO) will see members of the sector discussing issues and challenges experienced by those designing and delivering mental health policy and services. Measureable action will be high on the agenda as the non-government mental health community comes together formally for the first time at Hotel Realm on Tuesday 9 October 2012.

The gathering will determine how the sector can collaborate more effectively to drive better mental health outcomes for all Australians no matter who they are or where they live. “One in five people will experience mental health issues this year alone and budgets are finite,” says Frank Quinlan CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia. “So it’s vital we get together as a sector to determine priorities and lobby government effectively to ensure the money gets directed to where it is most needed”.

Keynote speakers include co-host Robyn Kruk, CEO of the National Mental Health Commission who will present on the progress of the Commission’s ‘National Report card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention’ and Dawn O’Neill AM, previous CEO of Lifeline and beyondblue who will detail international experience of independent organisations working together toward shared objectives.

As well as fulfilling a role as MC for the day, prominent ABC medical journalist Sophie Scott will facilitate a panel discussion during which consumer, carer and service provider perspectives will be presented.

“The inaugural meeting of CONGO is the first gathering of a collaboration that we hope will soon become recognised by governments around the country as a highly influential and vocal advocacy group for the mental health sector” says Frank Quinlan. “Non-government organisations are ready to assist COAG to implement urgent mental health reforms over the next decade.”

Follow Twitter at #CONGO for more information about the event.

CONGO is part of a number of events planned around World Mental Health Day 10 October 2012. Follow the conversation on World Mental Health Day on Twitter at #wmhd2012 and on www.1010.org.au.

For more information on CONGO, World Mental Health Day or to arrange an interview or photograph please contact: Nicky White (0417 259 654) or Katrina Duncan (0420 804 832) at The Shannon Company.