

The Mind Reader

MENTAL HEALTH NEWS, ARTICLES
AND INFORMATION

July 2018

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Letter from Liz



Dear readers,

I have spent many years working in mental health and one of many things that stand out for me is the importance the workplace has in mental health and wellbeing. Over the last decade we have made considerable progress in understanding how the workplace can build personal resilience, promote and encourage wellbeing and effectively support employees who are going through hard times.

During my early years with WayAhead, one of the first help line calls I took was from an employer of a small building company who daily contracted casual labourers to work on his building sites. He phoned the help line because one of his casuals was obviously unwell (showing psychotic symptoms) and he wanted to help him but didn't know what to do. He said the casual didn't speak English, was a good worker and needed some help. He didn't think he had any family in Australia who could help him. At that time, it was the first call from an employer I had received. Sadly, I was surprised any employer in a blue-collar industry would care enough to phone, but it also touched my heart and reminded me that people do care, people want to help and we can be a very compassionate community. I have never forgotten that call.

Over the last decade it is not unusual to hear from employers who want to help their staff when they need help. They want to do their best to provide a supportive and happy workplace and ensure they foster their employee's wellbeing. Our WayAhead Workplaces program has become a vehicle for demonstrating good practice and showcases workplaces that take employee wellbeing very seriously. It is inspiring to hear what is happening in workplaces across Australia

I certainly don't want to imply that all workplaces take the wellbeing of their employees seriously. We should celebrate the workplace successes and congratulate those who are doing the right thing while at the same time, point out to those who could do better; that by seriously adopting a workplace wellbeing policy there will be wins for all. Compassion and caring is addictive and the workplace is the perfect place to spread it around.

Enjoy reading the articles in this edition and if you are in a workplace that cares for your mental health and wellbeing, celebrate and spread the word.

Have a great read,

Liz

Your health in your hands



Monday 16 July marks the beginning of an extensive national community engagement and communications strategy to inform all Australians on the benefits of My Health Record and their right to opt out should they choose not to have a digital health record.

This year, all Australians with a Medicare or Veterans Affairs Card will get a My Health Record unless they choose not to.

My Health Record is an individual's safe and secure digital health information, easily accessible by doctors, specialists, and hospitals.

Australian Digital Health Agency CEO Tim Kelsey said the expansion of My Health Record nationally this year will deliver a system that provides universal functionality, clear and concise content and, critically, a safe and secure clinical health service for all Australians.

"My Health Record can reduce the risk of medical misadventures by providing treating clinicians with up-to-date information. The benefits of digital health for patients are significant and compelling. Digital health can improve and help save lives," Mr Kelsey said.

"Strict privacy control, set by an individual, is a central feature of My Health Record. Each person can control the information in his or her My Health Record, and the healthcare provider organisations that can have access," said Mr Kelsey.

Having healthcare practitioners able to see discharge summaries, prescribed and dispensed medications as well as shared health summaries means a repository of accurate details is available to support clinical conversations when providing a medical story.

My Health Record can list results from pathology and imaging reports such as blood tests and x-rays. This available information means doctors have more time to spend with patients rather than chasing up their medical information. They then have a more detailed picture with which to make clinical decisions, diagnose and provide treatment.

Australians can also arrange to have a trusted loved one or friend be a Nominated Representative on their My Health Record to help manage their health information.

"One of the frustrations for people who are carers for loved ones, is they just don't have access to that person's health information. If we could all see the same information, we can work much more effectively as a team and support the person who are trying to care for," said Dr Meredith Makeham General Practitioner, Clinical Professor and Chief Medical Adviser, Australian Digital Health Agency.

"It's helpful to have a system like My Health Record that can keep provider, carer and patient information all on the same page together," said Dr Makeham.

Being a convenient way to keep track of key health information including medical conditions, allergies and advance care plans, the record provides many potential benefits to consumers. These include reduced duplication of tests, better coordination of care for people with chronic and complex conditions, and better informed treatment decisions.

During the opt out period between 16 July – 15 October 2018, individuals who do not want a record will be able to opt out by visiting the My Health Record website or by calling 1800 723 471 for phone based assistance.

Other Key Facts about My Health Record

- When a My Health Record is activated it's empty. The individual has the choice to add two years of Medicare data but a person's medical history will not automatically be uploaded. Going to a doctor and asking for a shared health summary to be uploaded will mean a summary of an individual's past medical details will be added only if they choose it to be.
- While individuals can review their own key health information they have the comfort of knowing that more detailed clinician and consultation medical records stay with their doctor and are not uploaded to My Health Record.
- Allowing 24/7 access from anywhere with an internet connection having a My Health Record while travelling interstate or in an emergency can be a noticeable advantage.
- My Health Record has multilayered and strong safeguards in place to protect individual information including encryption, firewalls, secure login, authentication mechanisms and audit logging.
- Personally controlled settings allow the user control over who sees the information and what they see. With three options to: set an access code to give access only to selected healthcare providers, control access to specific documents or give access to a nominated representative such as a family member, close friend or carer; the privacy control is completely set by the individual.
- Audit logging means the person can see which provider has accessed their documents and when. Setting up SMS notifications means an email or text is sent any time a new healthcare provider accesses an individual's My Health Record, including in an emergency.

People can choose to have Medicare data including MBS and PBS data, organ donation decisions and immunisations from the Australian Immunisation Register added.

WayAhead in Orange



In mid-June WayAhead went to Orange as part of the [Collective Purpose Speaker Series](#). The event was a joint effort between the Collective Purpose partners, WayAhead, NSW Mental Health Carers and Being and the [Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health \(CRRMH\)](#) based in Orange.

More than 50 locals braved the cold winter evening in Orange and joined us at Orange Public School to discuss the event's main theme of how suicides in rural areas can be prevented by empowering local communities to take prevention measures, which in part is articulated well in CRRMH's recently released position paper:

"It was really great to go to Orange and meet with the local community to hear directly from them what their experiences have been and what they believe are the solutions which will work in their town to prevent more people dying from suicide.

"Obviously we could not have done this event alone and the work of the CRRMH team was phenomenal and we are deeply thankful for all their time and efforts helping us put the Speaker Series event on," said WayAhead CEO Elizabeth Priestley.

Some of the main talking points from attendees at the event centred on the need for the local community to be involved in every step to create a solutions driven approach. It was the view of those attending that a local strategy needed to be created to solve local problems and that a state or even national approach would fail to get buy-in from local communities. It was stressed that any future prevention strategy would fail if it wasn't designed around the needs of the local community and received high levels of engagement from locals when being designed.

Another key issue was the stigma and discrimination people who either previously or were currently seeking treatment for mental ill health issues faced in the community, despite the fact that many people facing discrimination had lived with good mental health for years. Hearing people's lived experiences of the discrimination they faced because of the treatment they needed, reinforced WayAhead's belief that more must be done to stop people with a lived experience of mental ill health being stigmatised and discriminated against. A huge issue that Orange and many other rural NSW communities are facing at the moment is the consistent lack of decent rain and the subsequent onset of drought. Drought means that these communities are now at greater risk of adverse mental health and wellness outcomes which include suicide. WayAhead understands this and in the coming months we will endeavour to do everything we can to ensure that it is getting its messages of mental health and suicide prevention through to communities at risk. "WayAhead is committed to being an active presence in regional and rural NSW to make sure that people in these communities know what help is available to them. A lot of the time people need support to get through tough times like drought. Sometimes it is about understanding what services can be accessed immediately, sometimes it's about getting a better understanding of what particular mental health illnesses are and also how the mental

health system in NSW works, all of which WayAhead and CRRMH can assist with.

“To demonstrate this commitment, WayAhead and its Collective Purpose partners will be seeking to extend its working relationship with CRRMH throughout 2018 and beyond. We know that collaboration is key in working in regional and rural areas of the state and we see our role as supporting the great work many mental health organisations such as CRRMH are doing on the ground every day, not replicating it,” said Ms Priestley.

The Rural Suicide and its prevention Speaker Series event in Orange was recorded and can be viewed in full for free [HERE](#).

By Ben Graham

Better mental health for Ryde's Vietnamese community



Trying to find the right support for yourself or a loved one with a lived experience mental health issues can be hard, especially if English is not your first language. A new initiative between WayAhead and Mental Health Carers NSW (MHCN), supported by funding from the City of Ryde, aims to change that.

The Vietnamese Mental Health Support Group is a joint initiative that aims to fill a gap for those seeking support, a gap that is cultural and linguistic. "There is a lack of support in the community for people from minority communities in Australia. There is more for some larger ethnic communities, although still not enough, but for people who have come from some of those smaller communities, like the Vietnamese community, there's just really nothing," said Laura Knight, Project Officer at Mental Health Carers NSW.

Each group session will run for two hours, once a month. The group will start in October in Ryde, led by two trained, bilingual facilitators.

"The Vietnamese Support Group will be facilitated by two Vietnamese-speaking facilitators and we envision that... everyone in the room will be speaking Vietnamese. It'll also be a little bit structured, so every month will have a certain topic, like self-care or the NDIS or something like that," said Rachel Flint, WayAhead's Support Groups Leader.

Although WayAhead has translated the anxiety disorders factsheet into Vietnamese and written about the mental health challenges in the Vietnamese community elsewhere in Sydney, this will be the first time that the organisation will be working with partners to run a longer-term project. As well the WayAhead, MHCN and the City of Ryde, Transcultural Mental Health will also be providing support.

"It was discussed with Transcultural Mental Health, that with certain cultural groups, it's really hard to find people that are willing to facilitate because there is a barrier there, and there is this big stigma around mental health so it was agreed that we'd try and do some kind of paid facilitation as a bit more of a draw card to bring more people in," said Laura.

For both Rachel and Laura, finding the right facilitators who would have the ability to steer the group and speak in Vietnamese was key to the success of the project.

"I think we knew that that was going to be the biggest barrier; if we couldn't find people who could facilitate who were bilingual, it was going to be a bit of a flop. I think the fact that it's all fallen into place and it's just been a really good process so far is great. It's just exciting to give back to, and help out, the Vietnamese community and put something out there for them," said Laura. "The facilitators do have a background in mental health, they're not clinicians or anything like that. We will also give them training in partnership with Transcultural Mental Health; they're putting together a training package for the facilitators and we will get them to do Mental Health First Aid. And then we will be constantly mentoring them along the way as well and giving them lots of support," said Rachel.

Although the project is a completely new venture for both WayAhead and MHCN and it is currently only funded for a year, both Laura and Rachel are optimistic about what the opportunities are and what the learnings could be going forward.

"I think the interesting thing is that because it is a group for carers and family members and people with lived experience of mental health issues, so I don't think that that's something that's common in support groups," said Laura.

"If it works, we could use it as a model for other communities because we will have done it and we can go for the funding and we know a lot more by the end of this process and I definitely think we could use it for other communities," said Rachel.

For now, WayAhead and MHCN are focussed on launching the project in time for Mental Health Month in October and providing support for one of Sydney's minority communities.

"I think it's really exciting that we've been able to actually create this group and provide something for the Vietnamese community in their own language," said Rachel.

"I think it's phenomenal that we're actually able to do it."

By Tasnim Hossain

Supporting employee's mental health and wellness at work



In June, [WayAhead Workplaces](#) members came together to discuss the future of workplaces for the Annual Members Forum.

“One of the key things we got our members to consider during the day was what they and their organisations were currently doing in terms of workplace wellness and how they can take that to the next level, no matter what stage their organisation was up to with its program,” said WayAhead’s Workplace Health Lead Sharon Leadbetter.

During the event, Megan Kingham and Ben Murray gave an overview about how Optus are assisting their staff who were working in the Bourke Street store in Melbourne the day of the Bourke Street car attack, which saw a driver running down pedestrians killing six people. The attack occurred outside of Optus’ Bourke Street store which has a full glass street-facing façade, meaning the staff in the store during the attack saw everything and were in lockdown with their customers.

The team from Optus spoke about what happened from an operational aspect as soon as they discovered what had occurred in Bourke Street and what support is continuing to be provided to all Optus staff members affected by the events of that day.

One year later, there was another car attack nearby in Flinders Street, which was very triggering for the staff who lived through the Bourke Street attack. During this event, the Optus management team had a chance to implement their learnings from the first incident, which is a rare opportunity.

Another prominent speaker during the event was NSW Small Business Commissioner Robyn Hobbs OAM. Commissioner Hobbs spoke about the Commission’s work with small businesses throughout the state who often face hardships due to several reasons, including when natural disasters strike.

“Small businesses make up such a large part of the NSW economy and serve many important purposes to communities throughout the state. It’s important we help small business owners establish a workplace wellbeing mandate or policy, as due to the commercial pressures of running their business, they might not always have the time to execute a dedicated health and wellness program for their staff.

“For small business owners, taking the time to invest in yourself and your team is an investment in your business, because if you or your team falls over, your business falls over,” said Sharon.

Sometimes people operating their own business or who work for a small organisation, may want to implement their own staff wellness program, but can’t due to feeling overwhelmed with where to start or how to make the program sustainable and meaningful with limited time and resources to devote to it.

“To those people I would say don't do nothing, don't wait till something goes wrong at work to start taking steps towards bettering your team's mental health and wellness. The team at WayAhead are available to help people take the first step, whatever that might look like for you and your company,” said Sharon.

Sharon also explained that the Annual Forum is part of WayAhead's overall interest in developing meaningful ways employers can help their employees with their mental health and wellbeing at work.

“The WayAhead Workplaces Annual Members Forum is just another way that WayAhead demonstrates its commitment to mentally healthy workplaces and people. The event is a chance for people to meet from a range of industries and organisations big and small to learn from each other. Our members tell us that the peer-to-peer networking, learning and sharing that happens at these meetings is a key reason for their attendance, as is the relevance of the forum topics to their daily work,” said Sharon.

For more information about WayAhead Workplaces, visit workplaces.wayahead.org.au/

By Ben Graham

He'll be right: My Journey with Anxiety



I was probably always what people would assume was just shy, as a child, but there was always that worry that other kids didn't seem to have. Things got really bad around Year 7, when I was going into high school and I wasn't dealing very well with all the social changes and I started to withdraw more and more and I stopped going to school often. It just kept getting more and more difficult to force myself to go. I started seeing a team of people but they were pretty bad at what they do.

I was extremely depressed; the anxiety was a problem. I was ashamed of all of that, being found out by my peer group. I mean, things have improved in these last twenty something years but certainly, at that point in time, men were not supposed to be depressed or have feelings. You were supposed to just be confident and that's the sort of image that was in Australia. And that definitely was not very helpful to me at that point in time. I know I would have taken my own life if I knew my peers had found out about it. That was the level of shame around my anxiety and depression. The team that I saw, they gave up on me when I was at such a young age, it might have been Year 8. They said I could keep coming but they didn't feel it would be helpful and this was a team of people who were supposed to be experts in their field. I had to learn how to do it on my own without anyone's help.

I was spending a lot of time on my own, not doing much. I was still managing to keep a few friends, but I was still hiding it from them. Definitely all that time, in those formative years, being away from those social interactions certainly didn't help. My social anxiety was really terrible; just being able to communicate with people I'd met was very, very difficult. Things that seem crazily trivial now were impossible to me at the time.

This sort of stuff was not really well-established – depression, with men, even for women as well. There was certainly stigma, but more so for men. You look back on things like postpartum depression and things like that, it's a really only very recently in the last 10, 20 years that there is a mainstream understanding. And with men, there's always been that sort of, particularly in Australia as well, that macho sort of society; you suck it up, you know. I think that's overall been damaging for me and for many men. I mean, look at the suicide rates with young men and feeling like you can't speak about these things, feeling shame to be able to speak about these things, bottling it up, not having an outlet.

That feeling of hopelessness, the impossibility of change, and all that stuff, there were definitely times when I had that feeling of hopelessness and "this is never going to change, this is all I'm going to have and is there any point to life?" Being able to find those first steps, I think, are so important. You look at that cliff face and you want to get to the top and you think "maybe these steps will work" and you get up that first step and you look back and you can look back and think "this is how far I've come, this is progress, I've done something". It is so important to just be able to say "this isn't hopeless, this isn't all I have for life, I can move on, I can progress and it's a hard climb but I can get to the top, and that was something that's a huge thing for getting out of that point, just making that small amount of progress and I did it clumsily and I did it without help."

Those first steps are often times so difficult and so stress inducing but I think that helped me. When I am feeling down, even now, when I'm down in the dumps and the anxiety is bad, I can look back and think about how far I've come. Even if I'm focussing in my head about all the negative, all the bad things, I remind myself that this is the progress that I have made, from not leaving the house, never wanting to leave the house on my own, to living a fairly productive life.

It's been good going to the Anxiety Support Groups. It's helping me to look constructively about what I did. I remember the first or second group I went to, there was this guy who had a daughter who was 20 and she's not leaving the house and "you seem confident, how did you get from there to where you are?" and I kind of just froze because I thought, "well, how did I do these things?" Unfortunately, it takes a lot of distress, a lot of pain, exposure therapy, also challenging thoughts has been helpful but not to a 100 per cent. I know I'm being irrational, I know when the anxiety is setting in, it's not a logical thing, because I'm quite a logical person, most of the time, but it doesn't make the feelings go away either. I guess mostly, it's been really just exposure, putting myself in difficult situations, continuing to do so. I didn't actually think I'd benefit from the support groups but I went as something that would make me uncomfortable, make me feel anxious, to challenge myself.

Going to the group was helpful, I have been open about things with friends, with family in the past, but until that point I'd never spoken to someone who had a similar experience. And I guess in those first few times at the support group, what made me keep wanting to come back was not just that it was good and freeing for me but some people did seem to take something from some of my experience, about what things have worked for me. It's good to always note that everyone's different and it's not an exact thing with psychology. What things help someone won't necessarily help someone else but still. It did make me think maybe I have something to offer in that area. I met someone there who works as a peer support worker, which wasn't a job I was aware of existing prior to that, and so I thought that's something I'd like try to do. One of the facilitators suggested maybe I wanted to try to facilitate a group so signed up for the training and I have started doing that as well. I have seen a few different psychologists, things like that, that have made suggestions to me a lot of which hasn't worked necessarily but it's still good, valid information that could work for other people.

I have always struggled with being vulnerable and trying things that sort of putting myself out there and saying "this is the best I can do" and then the possibility of people saying "well, that's shit." So that's always been a difficult thing for me – failure, fear of failure.

When I was younger I would tell people I was sick, just say sick, and try to avoid questions. I must have been 18 or something at that point and my friend and I were just hanging out, talking, and I told him about being depressed. I was thinking it was going to be such a big thing and then he was like "yeah, I've been depressed in my life as well". I thought "well, that didn't go so bad" and it was really kind of a blasé thing for him and then we went down and I told my other friend and it was quite freeing to sort of be able to talk about it and not be harshly judged. Some people see me go through some pretty bad times but those close friends I had made at that point are still good friends of mine now.

It does help me to go through certain scenarios in my head, most won't eventuate but I try to think of the worst things that could happen and think "can I be okay with that?" Unfortunately, bad experiences are going to happen and, you know, my bass teacher, when I first started playing said, "everyone makes mistakes, it's how you recover." Because you're going to make a mistake, but you can't just stop playing. You've got to get back into it and just keep going and try to make it as minimally impactful to the song as possible. Same with life. Try to take in that damage and not have it be something big. And over the years, I have gotten better with things like obsessing for weeks over if I've said something or done something or even silly, little things like you know when you go to pass someone and you both go the same direction, I think about it for hours afterwards.

I would love to be able to work with young people with anxiety, you know, being there for people, when I was most alone with it but just doing something, doing these groups and stuff, you know, trying to be helpful to people.

If this raises any concerns for you, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Mensline on 1300 78 99 78.

If you would like to know more about anxiety, contact us at the WayAhead Anxiety Disorders Information Line on 1300 794 992.

By an Anxiety Support Group attendee and facilitator as told to Tasnim Hossain

Why sharing the journey matters



What this year's Mental Health Month theme means to one of the WayAhead team members.

Sometimes when things are bad, when my emotions are exhausted and overwhelming, when my eyes are puffy and red from crying, on the lowest days, despite all the feelings, I can, even in a small way, feel some comfort in the knowledge that I have connections. That I have people I can talk to who will make me laugh, or smile, or even just say “that sounds awful” – it seems that even the worst days are made bearable by knowing that I can connect with others. But that hasn't always been my world. I remember so clearly being in a room full of people, all having fun, and feeling utterly lost and hopeless because I was so lonely. So alone. Despite doing things which are “fun”, having no one to share it with, whether I wanted to or not, in-person or on the phone, the fun things felt empty somehow.

Loneliness has been shown to have as big a health impact as smoking, and, importantly, the perception of your own loneliness is more important than whether you see people every day, or are “objectively” alone. If you feel lonely, that's real for you. You can be surrounded by people and feel lonely, or you can be on your own and feel connected to others, but if you experience loneliness, you likely know the pang of the realisation that there's no one to share things with.

The theme of this year's Mental Health Month is Share the Journey, and whilst this might, for some, mean sharing a specific mental illness journey, it's mostly about the journeys everyone can share – the moments of social connection, of seeing and being seen, of feeling valid in the eyes and hearts of others. Something we all can benefit from, something that can improve our mental wellbeing no matter whether we have a diagnosed mental illness, or just coping with day-to-day life.

If loneliness is a sickness, the remedy is connectedness. We might connect with others to “cure” our own loneliness, or to prevent it in someone else. Like many positive actions, it benefits the giver and the giftee – sharing a cup of tea with a friend who has had a bit of a rough time will help them feel a bit more connected, but it will help you as well: the connection, and the reward of the comfort you've given another.

And while conquering loneliness might seem too big a task to imagine, sharing small things does make a difference, chips away at the mountain, carves paths to wellbeing.

Part of the Mental Health Month campaign this year is a series of postcards showing some of the small things people can do to increase social connectedness – Share a cuppa, a meal, a task, a song, a yarn, a hug – and the images show a wide variety of situations, including connection between people and animals (animals can be a great source of connectedness). If we can take small steps to connect with others, it does make a difference, however small. The postcards can also be written on and sent to someone – who doesn't love receiving some snail mail?

As a teenager, I had a few pen pals and seeing the envelopes, frequently brightly coloured or decorated with little drawings, gave me such excitement. I've recently taken up pen-palling again, and holding people in mind as

I write their letters, waiting expectantly for the reply, taking joy in each other's life in such a concentrated way makes me feel I have connections all over the world. And whilst I know that pen palling isn't for everyone, I think it's the small connections that can have the most impact. Things that don't feel like a burden, that are easy to do. Some people find connection in speaking to a room full of people, sharing their journey of mental illness, giving others connection and understanding through the power of contact – and that's hugely important. It's important that we hear more stories of all parts of the spectrum of mental health. Some people might find individual or group therapy the best way for them to share their journey. But social connectedness is important for all of us – and it will look different for each of us.

The more we work on our mental health when we are well and the more connections we build when everything's fine, the stronger we will be when things get a bit rough and the bigger our safety net will be if we fall.

Sharing the Journey needn't be difficult, but the rewards can be momentous.

Australian Mental Health Prize 2018 - Launched



National Mental Health Commission Chair Lucy Brogden has launched this year's Australian Mental Health Prize at UNSW Sydney, seeking nominations to recognise Australians making exceptional contributions in promoting mental health or in the prevention and treatment of mental illness through advocacy, research and services. Mrs Brogden, a psychologist and advocate for mental health support in the workplace and community, recently joined the Prize Advisory Committee. The Prize, now in its third year, was established by UNSW through its School of Psychiatry: "I am proud to be part of this year's search to recognise Australians who have made outstanding contributions to either the promotion of mental health or the prevention and treatment of mental illness in areas such as advocacy, research or service," said Mrs Brogden, who brings professional and personal experience to her role. "As many people know, I have personal experience with a family member with mental illness, and throughout the journey, I have seen a strong culture of continuing improvement in mental health services across Australia."

Mrs Brogden's husband John, a former leader of the NSW Liberal Party and current chairman of Lifeline Australia, has long spoken about his battles with mental illness.

"I know how vital it is that people know they do not need to go it alone," said Mrs Brogden. "Care can begin with a single conversation. However, many of those in need don't realise they have a wide range of services available that deliver a high standard of care for them when they are at a vulnerable period in their life."

UNSW established the Prize in 2016, with finalists and winners announced in October. Scientia Professor Philip Mitchell, Head of the School of Psychiatry, said the Prize was established to acknowledge those who were doing innovative work in this area, whether they were involved in the industry as a vocation or were advocates because they had been touched by mental illness.

"Anyone who knows of such a person would no doubt appreciate their achievements, but I would encourage them to take it one step further and nominate them for the Australian Mental Health Prize. This allows us all to recognise their work and dedication," said Professor Mitchell.

One of the biggest challenges Mrs Brogden sees is to reduce the stigma around mental illness.

"Stigma stops many people from seeking help," she said. "I'd like to see an end to this. Addressing misconceptions and discrimination related to mental illness is vital because an astonishingly large number of Australian adults will experience a mental illness at some point in their lifetime."

Ita Buttrose, Chair of the Australian Mental Health Prize Advisory Board, said there are hundreds, if not thousands of people in our community who deserve recognition.

"They may be working within the industry, as last year's co-winner Professor Allan Fels is, or have become a tireless advocate because of personal experience of living with a mental illness, like the 2018 co-winner, Janet Meagher," she said. "We urge people who know someone making a significant contribution in this field to nominate them."

“One in three Australians will experience a mental health issue, but those affected by mental illness include everyone in the orbit of an individual – those in their home life, work environment and their general support network. This means there are many millions of Australians touched by mental health issues. Acknowledging those who work or volunteer in the industry is an important part of the process to destigmatising mental illness.”

To enter, nominees must provide a CV and 200 words outlining the work being undertaken and how it is making an impact. Nomination forms can be obtained from: australianmentalhealthprize.org.au.

Entries close on 7 September 2018. Six finalists will be chosen with the winner announced in October.