



Mental Health Week ACT 2017

Coordinated by:
Mental Health Community Coalition ACT

Canberra celebrates Mental Health Week with free events throughout October

Release date: Thursday 5 October 2017

An outdoor live music concert showcasing local musicians in Glebe Park marks the beginning of Mental Health Week 2017 this Sunday 8 October, kicking off a month-long calendar of events in the ACT.

Mental Health Week is a global event celebrated in over 100 countries to improve understanding of mental illness, reduce stigma and promote initiatives that support positive wellbeing.

Throughout Mental Health Week, a series of free events run by not-for-profit groups and community organisations will occur across the ACT throughout the month of October. The launch event this Sunday, and events throughout the month, are designed to bring the community together in solidarity to support an issue that affects one in five Australians each year.

During Mental Health Week 2017, there is particular focus on minority and marginalised groups. This comes at a time when the same-sex marriage debate is having a significant impact on the mental health of LGBTIQ+ people in the ACT. Events such as the Gender Diverse Prom, hosted by YWCA, and creative writing workshops run by *A Gender Agenda* are examples of events that target members of the LGBTIQ+ community; a population group twice as likely to experience mental illness compared to the general population¹.

The Mental Health Week 2017 campaign in the ACT 'Stronger Together', invites the community to share in a vision for full inclusion of people with mental health issues in a society that: values the contribution of people with mental illness; and offers support to people who are struggling. The launch concert tackles the stigma head-on by showcasing artists – some with lived experience of mental illness – who have turned their struggles into strength.

¹ National LGBTI Health Alliance (2017). *The Statistics at a glance: The mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Australia*. Available online: http://lgbtihealth.org.au/statistics/#_ftn1



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Mental Health Week in the ACT is coordinated by the Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC ACT) in partnership with ACT Government. Events throughout the month are made possible by the Mental Health Week Reimbursement Grants Program, administered by MHCC ACT on behalf of the ACT Government. This program is designed to assist not-for-profit groups and grassroots organisations to run events with a mental health focus catering to a broad cross-section of the ACT community.

The full calendar is available at mentalhealthweekact.org/calendar

Media Contact: Emily Roser, 02 6249 7756, emily.rosier@mhccact.org.au

Alternative: Simon Viereck, simon.viereck@mhccact.org.au