



Mental Health Month Awards 2018 – Winners Announced

Embargo: 9 October 2018

Today the ACT Mental Health Month Awards will recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations in the ACT who are working to promote and improve the understanding, awareness and general mental health and wellbeing of the Canberra community.

“It’s good to take time out to recognise the outstanding contribution people and organisations are making to improve the overall mental health and wellbeing in our local community”, said MHCC ACT Executive Officer, Simon Viereck. “These awards are an important reminder of the support and initiatives we have in Canberra and the commitment many individuals make to improve the lives of others.”

The official award ceremony will take place at 2pm Tuesday 9 October at the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The Minister for Mental Health, Shane Rattenbury will present each of the awards alongside Dalane Drexler, Executive Officer ACTMHCN.

The awards are just one event taking place in the ACT throughout Mental Health Month. The Mental Health Month event calendar showcases 25 events, many of which are free to attend including dragon boating, yoga, mindfulness activities and the integral Mental Health & Wellbeing Expo.

The calendar is put together by MHCC ACT and is available at <https://www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/calendar>.

Mental Health Month Award Winners 2018

1. 2018 Mental Health Month Consumer of the Year Award

Matthew Martin - As a member of the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Matthew has been working with the Mental Health, Justice Health and Drug Support Services division of the ACT Health Directorate as a consumer representative for approximately five years. Matthew not only gives his time voluntarily to contribute to, and improve, the mental health system in the ACT, he is a contributing member on several ACT health committees and is the ACT representative on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum. Matthew also participated in the opening of the Secure Mental Health Unit, Dhulwa, sharing his story of mental illness and his experience with the criminal justice system

2. 2018 Mental Health Month Carer of the Year Award

Natalie Malcolmson - Natalie cares for her partner who has Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), and has trained in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy offering her skills to training for those with, or caring for, people with BPD and other illnesses. Committed to increasing the capacity and resilience of carers and consumers with a mental illness, Natalie also volunteers to help carers of people with BPD by running a monthly support group and facilitating the twelve week Family Connections program.

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3. Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Program of the Year Award

Menslink – For their program that targets young men aged 10-25, fostering resilience, help seeking behaviours and a belief in each person's capacity to survive and thrive. Menslink seeks out positive male role models for young men so that they can avoid the potential pitfalls of violence, drugs and alcohol, self-harm and suicide. This program provides a range of free, evidence-based, highly reputable programs that sit squarely in the mental health early intervention, prevention and promotion space. Operating in the ACT for over 15 years Menslink has been supporting young men by encouraging them to speak up and get help; providing intense short term counselling; and matching young guys with longer term mentoring support.

4. Certificate of Commendation for Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention

Tony Baker – celebrate his role in delivering mental health support and training to the male dominated industries, an area he worked in himself for over 30 years. He is the 'go to guy' for health and wellbeing in the building and construction industry as well as other blue collar industries. Tony's intimate understanding of the stigma surrounding mental health in these specifically male dominated industries helps break down the barriers.

5. Reciprocity Award

Katrina McLean - Working with Richmond Fellowship ACT for 9 years, she has developed a comprehensive expert skill set that promotes self-determination and optimises recovery for the participants she works alongside. Of particular note, Katrina has set up two stand out programs that you may have heard of - Sensory Garden installation at Ray Moreton Park launched in May 2013, remaining an enduring symbol of mental health recovery, hope and aspiration and the FreshMess program that recognised the connect between poor diet and poor physical and mental health outcomes.

6. Mental Health Volunteer Award

Eunice Jolliffe, Ros Williams and Ann Finlay: these three remarkable women have been through the coronial inquest system after the death of a family loved one, and overcoming their grief, anger and anguish, they found the strength to establish the Coronial Reform Group to fight for a more responsive, timely and equitable coronial system. They want bereaved families to have their voices properly heard and acted on and support other families through harrowing coronial inquests.

Their major submission to the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council resulted in coronial reform becoming one of the recommended areas for restorative process trials in the ACT. Its effective advocacy influenced the government to implement real time prescription monitoring in the ACT. CRG adopts collaborative approaches, dedicates countless, unpaid hours and consults with key parties. Their work is leading to a more timely, supportive and effective coronial system and better lives for people affected by mental illness through service improvements.

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7. David Perrin Award

Rose Beard - presented in memory of David Perrin – an individual with multiple disabilities who made his mark in mental health services. It is awarded to a mental health consumer who lives an independent and self-determined life, while negotiating complex mental illness. Rose lives with, and negotiates, complex mental illness, disability and chronic illness related to an ongoing battle with cancer. In addition, Rose is heavily involved in the caring of her adult son, James who lives with severe autism and mental illness. Rose is a force of nature, participating in all areas of the ACT Mental Health Community. Rose chaired the Consumer and Carer Caucus for two years and is an active mental health consumer representative through the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network. Rose is also a sought after live speaker, speaking at National events such as 2018 TheMHS Conference. Rose was in Australia's initial "This Is My Brave" event held in Canberra and provides extensive support for James, like when she played 'Santa's helper' to James's Santa for Kairos Outside for Women, for kids whose parents were incarcerated at Christmas time.

8. Michael Firestone Memorial Scholarships

Established in recognition of Michael's tireless efforts in assisting mental health consumers through information, education and referral, as well as his long personal battle with an education provider regarding his own issues of discrimination. There are two winners this year:

Delia Quigley - the 2018 ACT Senior Volunteer of the Year for her work for Diversity ACT and Lifeline, Delia is a retired AFP officer who served as a peacekeeper in Timor Leste, Cyprus, Sudan, Haiti and on assistance missions in Jordan & the Solomon Islands. Stemming from her role in the AFP, she is living with PTSD and a number of other medical conditions. Delia is now undertaking a Graduate Diploma in Relationships Counselling. She has been studying counselling part-time for the last three years, with the goal of providing free or low-cost counselling to low income clients of Diversity A.C.T

Siân Jackson - Siân is a young woman living with terminal illness and the comorbidity of mental illnesses as a flow on effect of that condition. Despite the very raw deal her genetics have handed her, she is a source of light, joy and inspiration for all who know her. She uses physical performance as one component of her physical and mental health management strategy. Siân has recently begun to explore circus performance as another field of artistic endeavour. Her long term goal is to study at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) and this scholarship will be used to purchase circus equipment to assist with auditions for NICA

For full details about Mental Health Month in the ACT visit <https://www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/>.

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Images: Official logos, photos and other resources are available at www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/resources

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