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## MEDIA RELEASE

### QUEENSLANDERS SUFFERING FROM POOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

"The Queensland Government faces a very large resource and workforce challenge if it is to provide even basic mental health care services across the state," Chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia, Keith Wilson said today following the launch of *Not For Service: Experiences of Injustice and Despair in Mental Health Care in Australia*, the most significant report into mental health in Australia for over a decade.

"There are many reports of poor access to basic services throughout Queensland and political, professional, and community leadership is urgently required", Mr Wilson said.

*Not For Service* exposes the persistent and distressing experiences of Australians dealing with mental illness that result from the systemic deficiencies of the mental health systems 12 years after all Australian Governments initiated the National Mental Health Strategy to tackle decades of neglect.

The Report states that issues relating to security and the perceived threat to the community posed by persons with mental illness have received excessive and unbalanced media attention in Queensland.

Queensland Alliance Executive Director Jeff Cheverton said, "There needs to be more recognition of the role non-government organisations play in supporting people in the community and keeping them well. People with mental illness want to live in the community – not in hospitals. A significant increased investment in community-based services is required to create a better mental health system. Without this investment people with mental illness will continue to find themselves homeless or in prison, and without support."

Professor Ian Hickie, a co-author the report stresses that Australia urgently needs all governments to commit to a process of genuine and well-resourced mental health reform. "What we do not need is continued blaming of those who use the services, those professionals who provide the services or those independent bodies who report on them," Professor Hickie said.

*Not For Service* calls on all Australian governments to increase expenditure on mental health care services by 1% per annum for each of the next five years, bringing expenditure by 2010 to 12% of total health care funding in real terms.

The Queensland Government must increase spending on mental health in 2006/7 by \$49m based on their 2004/5 health budget.

*Not For Service* has been compiled by the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) and the Brain and Mind Research Institute (BRMI, University of Sydney), in association with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

**Copies of *Not For Service* can be found at: [www.mhca.org.au](http://www.mhca.org.au)**

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