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## MEDIA RELEASE

### LACK OF BASIC SERVICES FOR MENTALLY ILL IN TASMANIA

"Tasmanians face a serious lack of access to basic mental health services such as community-based health and housing services," 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 has recently been an increase in funds from a very low base – an injection of \$47 million from the beginning of this year to June 2008 – but more is needed to address the legacy of a decade or more of chronic under funding", 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 twelve years after all Australian Governments initiated the National Mental Health Strategy to tackle decades of neglect.

The Report states that Tasmania faces a range of development challenges such as shortages in medical workforces, infrastructure and community-based services.

Daryl Lamb, the Chair of Mental Health Council Tasmania said: "There have been some positive outcomes in the last ten years. Tasmania reports the highest number of total inpatient and 24-hour staffed residential beds and the highest number of clinical service delivery staff. We welcome the *Bridging the Gap* initiative by the government and expect its reforms to have a significant impact on early intervention and recovery services across the state."

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 who 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 Tasmanian Government, must increase spending to reach \$114m by 2010-11 as expressed in 2004/5 dollars or 12% of the total 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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