



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

MIND AUSTRALIA
40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Wednesday 11 October, 2017

Prof Alan Fels AO, Board Chair, National Mental Health Commission

Mr Julian Gardner AM & Dr Gerry Naughtin, respectively Chair & CEO of Mind Australia

Ebonyrose Lyons

Distinguished guests, including the many representatives from mental health organisations, Government and academia present

Ladies and gentlemen

In the spirit of reconciliation, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered, and pay my respects to their elders, past and present and any elders present with us this morning.

I am delighted to welcome you all to Government House to celebrate the milestone 40th anniversary of Mind Australia, particularly during Mental Health Week. The Governor sends her warm wishes to all and joins with me in these remarks. They will be brief as I am to be followed by Mr Gardner and then one of the participants in the Mind program.

Over the past 40 years, Mind has played an instrumental role pioneering community based care, psychosocial support and residential services which offer hope and dignity to those suffering mental illness.

I don't need to describe to you the challenges, indeed the ravages of this affliction, which permeate every level and strata of society. As a criminal barrister and judge for the past 43 years, I have unfortunately seen the worst side of human behaviour, much of it intimately linked to or caused by mental impairment of one sort or another. Regrettably, the estimates are that about 60% of those incarcerated in Victoria suffer from a mental illness or

psychological disorder. Sadly, there are inadequate professional services to deal with that problem. One of the answers is early intervention, particularly with young people. Another is the community based programs of the kind provided by MIND. Yet another is to speak openly and supportively about mental illness, particularly with men, so as to dispel the stigma and fear so unfairly associated with it.

Much positive work has been done by Mind over the past 40 years. But dealing with its current work, I note that in 2016, it supported over 12,000 people with mental illness throughout Victoria and beyond. Importantly, it has responded to community needs and tailored programs for the disadvantaged and the young, and for the culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ communities, to mention but a few recent developments. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of research and collaboration underpinning its operational models. Importantly, it has empowered its clients to actively participate in the community, to take responsibility for their own health care and, as far as possible, to lead a life of their choosing. But there is, of course, much work yet to be done.

I want to thank all the staff, carers and volunteers of Mind for their inspiring professionalism and compassion. It is also appropriate to recognise the struggle and courage of those afflicted by mental illness and their families and friends, who also share that burden, often with remarkable love and fortitude.

Finally, I commend the great work of your chair, Julian Gardner, and the directors of Mind and your CEO, who all continue to lead the way in innovative health care and support for people with mental illness.

Today is genuinely one for celebration. Happy 40th Anniversary to Mind Australia. The Governor and I wish you every success for many more years to come.