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MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER GUIDELINES LAUNCHED

Australian health practitioners now have their own guidelines to help people with posttraumatic mental health problems.

The Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Adults with Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (ASD and PTSD) were launched today by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Bruce Billson, at Parliament House, Canberra.

The guidelines were developed by the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (ACPMH), and have been approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

"Over a quarter of a million Australians experience PTSD in any one year," ACPMH Director, Professor Mark Creamer, said.

"It is the second most prevalent mental health disorder affecting Australians after depression, and carries a higher suicide risk than any other anxiety disorder.

"Without effective treatment, the conditions can become chronic and debilitating, and until now there has been a gap between proven treatments and routine clinical care.

"The guidelines aim to bridge this gap by promoting evidence-based interventions such as trauma-focused therapies.

"Today's announcement signals an exciting development for mental health and the treatment of posttraumatic mental health problems."

Chair of the NHMRC's National Health Committee, Professor Colin Masters, said that in a field where every case was different, the guidelines were extremely useful for all parties in helping to answer two fundamental questions:

"When is the right time for professional intervention and what is the best treatment approach?"

Stuart Tripp, a car accident survivor, shared his story of recovery at the launch to highlight how the Guidelines can help people affected by trauma to make choices about their care on the road to recovery.

Guidelines available at: www.acpmh.unimelb.edu.au

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