

MEDIA RELEASE – 7 AUGUST 2009

**Veterans' Affairs Minister Opens Australian Centre for
Posttraumatic Mental Health in Melbourne**

Today the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, will open the new premises of The Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (ACPMH) in East Melbourne. The ACPMH is the pre-eminent research, training and policy centre for the prevention, recognition and treatment of mental health problems associated with experience of traumatic events in both civilian and non-civilian populations. ACPMH personnel are at the cutting edge of knowledge about psychological recovery from trauma.

Forums on the following topics will be held immediately after the opening.

Best Practice Interventions for Traumatized Populations

Professor Mark Creamer, Director, ACPMH will be discussing issues including:

What should be done for the whole affected community following terrorist attacks, natural disasters or acts of human malevolence? What does the research tell us about how best to intervene following trauma to minimise adverse psychological impacts and what is the role of GPs and other primary care providers in achieving this? How should we treat more severe, long term posttraumatic mental health problems?

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Responses to Psychological Trauma in High Risk Industries

Associate Professor David Forbes, Deputy Director, ACPMH will be discussing issues including:

We know that some occupations are regularly exposed to trauma – what should we be doing to promote psychological well being for these personnel? What kinds of interventions should be offered over the immediate, short- to medium-term following occupational trauma? What is the current status of the psychological debriefing controversy?

Achieving Better Outcomes Following Injury

Associate Professor John Pead, Senior Clinical Specialist and Dr Meaghan O'Donnell, Senior Research Fellow, ACPMH will discuss issues including:

What is the role of psychological factors in recovery from serious physical injury? What are the best ways to predict poor recovery after traumatic injury and to identify those at high risk? What can be done to promote effective psychological and physical recovery? How might we help people who remain disabled by their injuries?

Case study: Trauma Exposure and the Media Profession

Ms Cait McMahon, Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma will discuss issues including:

Journalists have a key role to play in the aftermath of trauma. How can we work with the media to ensure sensitive and constructive reporting that will promote, rather than interfere with, recovery? How are journalists who report on disaster, war and other trauma affected by these experiences? What can be done to assist and support them? This forum will bring together people from the media and those from other organisations who liaise with the media to address some of these important issues.

For further information please contact Tania Ewing on 0408378422