

**For immediate release:**  
Tuesday, 26 February 2013

## **Media release**

### **Mental health and technology leaders meet on social media and suicide prevention**

**Melbourne, 26 February 2013** – More than 50 representatives from Australia’s leading youth, mental health, media and technology providers will come together in Melbourne tomorrow to tackle the risks, challenges and opportunities presented by social media to promote mental health and suicide prevention in young people.

The five-hour roundtable discussion, hosted by the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre and the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative (which is managed by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health) – and facilitated by National Mental Health Commissioner Sam Mostyn – is the start of a process to define and agree a collaborative approach to minimise the risks and enhance the benefits that social media may provide to young people in distress.

Associate Professor Jane Burns, CEO of the Young and Well CRC, said, “Social media has become a powerful tool for young people to connect and engage with each other, but at the same time we know it presents an ongoing challenge for services, mental health providers and young people themselves when managing its risks – and particularly those who are most at-risk. We have a unique opportunity through the roundtable to really tackle these.”

Jaelea Skehan, Acting Director of Hunter Institute of Mental Health, said, “We’re encouraged by the strong interest shown by stakeholders in this event, and excited about the anticipated outcomes of the discussion. The sector is committed to finding a solution to this issue, and acknowledges that this can only be achieved through a united approach.”

This event follows an online consultation with young people held in December last year, to capture their views on the role that social media plays in relation to suicide. A group of young people who took part in this consultation will also attend the roundtable and share key insights from the discussion.

– ENDS –

#### **About the Young and Well CRC**

The Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre is an Australian-based, international research centre that unites young people with researchers, practitioners, innovators and policy-makers from over 70 partner organisations. Together, we explore the role of technology in young people’s lives, and how it can be used to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 25. The Young and Well CRC is established under the Australian Government’s Cooperative Research Centres Program. [youngandwellcrc.org.au](http://youngandwellcrc.org.au)

#### **About the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative**

The *Mindframe* National Media Initiative (*Mindframe*) aims to encourage responsible, accurate and sensitive representation of mental illness and suicide in the Australian news and entertainment media. The initiative involves education and training for the Australian media, stage and screen, journalism and public relations university students, mental health and suicide prevention sectors, and the police. Funded by the Australian Government’s Department of Health and Ageing under the National Suicide Prevention Program, *Mindframe* is managed by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health. Program activities include national leadership, resource development and national dissemination, and ongoing contribution to the evidence base in this area. [mindframe-media.info/home](http://mindframe-media.info/home)

#### **Media contacts**

Vicki Forbes  
Young and Well CRC  
0402 213 567  
[Vicki@yawcrc.org.au](mailto:Vicki@yawcrc.org.au)

Marc Bryant  
*Mindframe* National Media Initiative  
0427 227 503  
[Marc.Bryant@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Marc.Bryant@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au)