

Media app for reporting suicide & mental illness

Press Release - Friday Oct 17, 2014 - images attached

The Hunter Institute of Mental Health (Hunter Institute) today (FRI OCT 17) launched an app that supports busy journalists filing mental illness and suicide stories while on the run.

The *Mindframe* National Media Initiative (*Mindframe*) app is free and available on portable Android and Apple devices, for both smartphones and tablets, and can be used both off and on line.

(Download via <http://www.mindframe-media.info/home/resource-downloads/media-resources/?a=11269>)

The app complements existing media resources and aims to further support responsible, accurate and sensitive representation of mental illness and suicide in the Australian media.

The new app is understood to be the first of its kind internationally developed specifically for the time-poor media industry to allow faster access to *Mindframe* information, which includes quick reporting guides, facts and statistics, helpseeking information for promoting, and national story sources' contacts.

Hunter Institute Director Jaelea Skehan said: "Australia has had the longest running active strategy to engage journalists under the *Mindframe* Initiative.

"However, the race to be 'first' with breaking news in the digital era creates many challenges for reporting generally and specifically when we are dealing with sensitive issues like suicide and mental illness.

"With more media professionals using mobile and tablet devices, the *Mindframe* app will serve as a tool to support reporting in this environment," said Jaelea.

The idea of an app was driven through consultation with the media and mental health sectors, including the inaugural 2013 *Mindframe* Advisory Group members suggesting an app would support their work.

Newcastle Herald Editor and *Mindframe* Media Advisory Group member, Chad Watson, said: "Few issues are more sensitive, more complicated or have more impact on our community, and mental health experts and media organisations don't always agree, which is why the Newcastle Herald has done a lot of work with the *Mindframe* team over the years.

"Resources such as the new *Mindframe* app will help inform and support journalists faster as they negotiate difficult decisions while covering what should be covered," added Chad.

Under *Mindframe*, which managed by the Hunter Institute and funded by the Australian Government, guidelines are promoted to media through face-to-face training, active engagement (including through social media), and integration of the guidelines into journalism curricula.

ENDS:

For media comment, contact: Marc Bryant 0427227503 or Brooke Cross 0414 292403

- Available for interviews: Hunter Institute Dir Jaelea Skehan and *Mindframe* manager Marc Bryant

Notes for editors:

About the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative

The *Mindframe* National Media Initiative is managed by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health and funded by the Australian Government under the National Suicide Prevention Program. *Mindframe* aims to encourage responsible, accurate and sensitive representation of mental illness and suicide in the Australian media and



communications. The initiative does this through building the media capacity through education and training activities, working collaboratively with the media, those influencing the media (health and police sectors), journalism and public relations university programs, and the Australian film, television and theatre industry. For further information, visit www.mindframe-media.info.

About the Hunter Institute of Mental Health

The Hunter Institute of Mental Health works nationally to prevention mental illness and suicide. The organisation believes in putting prevention first to ensure we reduce mental illness and suicide for all Australians. Established locally in Newcastle in 1992 the organisation now leads national programs working in partnership with individuals, families and communities, including sectors like the media. The Hunter Institute of Mental Health has been leading the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative since its inception in 2002 and started early work with universities around the training of journalism students in the late 1990s. For more information about the Hunter Institute of Mental Health and its national prevention programs, visit www.himh.org.au .