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69% Experience Discrimination because they have a Mental Illness

A research bulletin released by SANE Australia today reveals that 69% of those surveyed had experienced discrimination due to mental illness.

CEO of the Queensland Alliance Jeff Cheverton said, "Half of us will experience a mental health disorder at some point in our lives, yet most of us struggle to know what to do when our family, friends or work colleagues experience mental illness.

"The Queensland Government has just announced funding for an anti-stigma initiative in the June budget. Given these findings I call on both Government and Opposition to match Health Minister Paul Lucas' initiative with a similar national program."

SANE surveyed over 550 Australians in March- April 2010 via an anonymous questionnaire.

Over half of the respondents (52%) reported that they did not feel part of their local community. Many reported that they had been treated disrespectfully at some time because of their mental illness (42%).

Research released in April (2010) led by the Queensland Alliance and supported by peak bodies in mental health around Australia (www.cmha.org.au), revealed that Australia is lagging behind the rest of the world when it comes to reducing the cost burden of mental ill health on our nation.

Currently, the cost of mental ill health is estimated at 3%- 4% of Australia's GDP.

"Social inclusion and anti-discrimination campaigns around the world have demonstrated they work to change attitudes and reduce the costs to society of mental illness. This new research from SANE demonstrates yet again that we desperately need national leadership on discrimination in mental health," Mr Cheverton said.

SANE Australia is a national charity working for a better life for people affected by mental illness through campaigning, education and research.

Queensland Alliance is the peak body for mental health in Queensland.

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