

PRESS RELEASE

A Report by the Mental Health Council of Australia and Brain and Mind Research Institute in association with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) entitled *'Not for Service: Experiences of injustice and despair in mental health care in Australia'* was released earlier this week. The report found that while spending on mental health in the Northern Territory has increased by 36.9% over the past decade, the Territory ranks fifth in Australia in terms of funding to non government organisations, last in terms of 24 hour and staffed residential beds per 100,000 population and has the lowest number of per capita clinical staff.

The report has also commented on the lack of culturally appropriate treatment services for indigenous Territorians in remote communities, lack of early intervention services, a reliance on police for transport to hospital and a serious lack of housing and supported accommodation services.

“These are all issues raised by the Community Visitor Program (CVP) over the past 12 months” said Mr Tony Fitzgerald, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and Principal Community Visitor.

“Treatment with dignity while in the acute phase of illness, the provision of culturally appropriate treatment, early intervention and access to housing and support is crucial for the recovery of a person with a diagnosed mental illness” Commissioner Fitzgerald said. “While in the short term, these programs may cost more, assisting people to recover their lives and become fully functioning community members will in the end result in a smaller financial and social burden on the community as a whole”.



TONY FITZGERALD
ANTI DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER

21 October 2005