



10th April 2005 – Immediate release

GOOD NEWS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK 2005 HIGHLIGHTS EMPLOYMENT

In a year when Australians learnt of the challenges faced by people with a mental illness, Mental Illness Fellowship Australia welcomes one man who has worked to provide opportunity: Professor Gary Bond, Chancellor's Professor of Psychology at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

Professor Bond, who tours Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide and Sydney from May 14 speaking with the public, politicians and sector professionals; specialises in employment for people with conditions such as schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder and depression. Professor Bond's credentials are impressive; having written 150 journal articles and book chapters, won five US national research awards and lectured from Finland to Hong Kong.

"Employment is the future for people with a mental illness," says Professor Bond. "It places people with a mental illness in the real working world. The first word is the key. People with a mental illness need support from family, employers and government. Employment is vital but it doesn't happen accidentally."

Work for people with a mental illness is all the more topical with Federal cabinet considering a raft of changes to the Disability Support Pension. "Trust me – people with a mental illness want to work," says Elizabeth Crowther, Chief Executive of Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria. "But trust me too when I say that they need support. That's why Gary Bond's opinions are so important."

"For people with mental illness working is much more than earning a living," says Elizabeth Crowther. "It cements these people's place in the community. It's not a therapy; employment is a right that we all should share."

PROFESSOR BOND IN MELBOURNE

Gary Bond will be in Melbourne to deliver the 8th Annual Woodcock Lecture at the BMW Edge Theatre in Federation Square on Tuesday, May 17 at 6pm. Leading broadcaster Neil Mitchell will introduce Professor Bond. www.mifellowship.org

Interviews available via Brett de Hoedt, 03 9510 0848 or brett@hootville.com

Gary Bond is touring Australia for the Mental Illness Fellowship Australia in May 2005 as part of Schizophrenia Awareness Week with the support of Eli Lilly Australia.

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