

**Media Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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### **One Door Mental Health welcomes call for parliamentary inquiry into mental health services**

Service provider One Door Mental Health supports the call for an inquiry into the mental health system in New South Wales, particularly after the recently-revealed outcome for Lismore Base Hospital patient, Ms Miriam Merten.

Rob Ramjan, CEO of One Door Mental Health says that Ms Merten's death was tragic and unnecessary.

"The mental health sector has always been under-resourced yet the number of people we need to support continues to increase. Almost 16% of patients are readmitted to their psychiatric ward within 28 days of discharge, giving NSW the highest rate of readmission in Australia. Almost half of patients do not receive adequate discharge follow-up. Now another life has been lost so an inquiry is necessary. What more will it take for the New South Wales government to act?"

"When someone living with mental illness is admitted to hospital, the purpose is to give them a higher level of care to help them on their way to recovery. In Ms Merten's case, the hospital and its staff failed in giving her even the most basic level of care. This is a devastating outcome for a woman who, statistically, had a very high chance of recovery," said Mr Ramjan.

"I have no doubt that an inquiry into the system would show that a lack of funding and a lack of staff training is at the core of the issues."

The Federal Government has taken steps to address the funding issue with a \$115 million increase for mental health programs, services and research in last week's budget announcement.

"This funding will help support those who are not eligible for an NDIS package but there are still large gaps. Funding for mental health services in Australia is under 6% of the total health budget. The burden of disease of mental illness is around 14%, and funding should be at that level. The World Health Organisation has said that funding for mental health services should be between 14 and 16% of the health budget. Therein lies a big part of the problem.

"The federal government needs to ensure adequate funding. This situation shows how much our psychiatric units need support. But our first goal has to be to provide the community-based services which would avoid hospital admissions," said Mr Ramjan.

"This week is Schizophrenia Awareness Week. Please, do what you can do, write to your local member and show your support for a parliamentary inquiry and give a voice to those people who can't speak for themselves."

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For further information or to interview Rob Ramjan, please contact:  
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Note for Editors: Through One Door Mental Health, people living with mental illness and their families can find an inclusive community, innovative services and strong advocacy. For more than 30 years One Door has designed and delivered expert mental health programs now available through the NDIS. Creating a world in which people with a mental illness are valued and treated as equals is at the heart of everything we do.

This year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Schizophrenia Awareness Week (14-20 May 2017).