



**WAAMH**

Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**23 May 2014**

### **Individual Placement and Support is a compelling solution for finding work**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) is proud at the establishment of four official Individual Placement and Support (IPS) sites - which help people with mental health issues find employment - in Western Australia, but the future funding of the IPS is in doubt.

Broome in WA's Kimberley region, alongside Bentley, Armadale and Fremantle in the Perth metropolitan area, all now boast the capacity to take on jobseekers diagnosed with a mental illness and assist them to find meaningful employment.

Other mental health services in the metropolitan Perth and regional WA are also on the cusp of hosting IPS services .

Wondering what the buzz around IPS is all about?

IPS is an internationally recognised and evidence-based employment model that's proven to work. It involves a collaborative partnership between a Mental Health Service and a Disability Employment Service, which results in appointing an IPS Specialist. This specialist works with the jobseeker to identify their strengths and aspirations and work towards finding them employment. IPS consistently achieves around 65% success rate compared with 25% success currently achieved overall in Australia.

This process goes beyond just earning a wage and securing financial independence - this is proven to aid the recovery of a person by increasing their social connectivity, feelings of self-worth and their sense of purpose – all of which have positive effects on people's state of mind.

A key recommendation by the Orygen Youth Health Research Centre is to fund high fidelity IPS employment and education services to be provided to young people around Australia.

The Centre's report, titled 'Tell Them They're Dreaming: Work, Education and Young People with Mental Illness in Australia', was released this week and examines a number of the barriers to the participation in employment and education of young people with mental illness in Australia.

Among the solutions to these barriers is IPS. "IPS is the bridge that links the vocational aspirations of people with mental illness, to the employment market," the report states.

You may have recently seen it referenced in national anti-depression and anti-anxiety campaigning group, beyondblue's report on Mentally Healthy Workplaces too.

Under the 2014 Federal Budget, people on a Disability Support Pension who are aged under 35 and commenced on the DSP before 2011, will need to have their capacity to work reassessed. It's imperative that these people are then linked with an effective means of locating employment, education or training.

Orygen Youth Health Research Centre's report states this policy announced in the budget means it's even more important that IPS employment services be established and delivered through headspace (for those under 25) and through community mental health settings for those over 25.



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WAAMH has been actively engaged in endeavours to implement IPS in WA for over three years.

The WA state government generously provided one off funding to establish a development unit for IPS in FY 2013/14. So far, four sites have successfully begun to flourish, with people already being placed in jobs.

However, this funding runs out on June 30, 2014 and the future financial investment in IPS in WA remains uncertain.

“Establishing development units for IPS that support services to achieve high fidelity IPS services is essential,” WAAMH Executive Director Rod Astbury said.

“Efforts have been made to establish high quality IPS services in Australia but due to lack of development and technical support the results have been mixed.

“It is not enough for the Federal Government to take a more rigorous assessment of work readiness. It must back this up with investment in strategies proven to help people find and stay in employment. For people with mental health issues that strategy is IPS.”

#### **About IPS**

Individual Placement & Support (IPS) is an evidence-based, supported employment model providing a means for individuals living with a mental illness to seek and obtain competitive employment. WAAMH leads a project to implement the well-researched IPS model in WA. IPS supports that paid employment is a human need; it is a model that fosters hope, participation and a sense of a better and brighter future. Employment can reduce and/or stabilise symptoms, increase self-worth and provide an increased disposable income for those with a lived experience of mental illness.

#### **About WAAMH**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) is the peak body representing the community-managed mental health sector in WA. Through our members, our vision is to lead the way in supporting and promoting the human rights of people with mental illness and their families and carers, with inclusive, well-governed community-based services focused on recovery. More at <http://www.waamh.org.au>

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