



Speaking out for people with  
mental health issues in NSW

## **Being – Media release**

**16 August 2019**

### **Response to the recent stabbing in Sydney CBD**

The Board and staff at Being would like to extend our condolences to those affected by this week's stabbing in the Sydney CBD. Our thoughts and deepest condolences go out to the families involved, and we express our compassion and empathy for the many people in our community who have been affected by the media coverage and the expanding story during this week.

Of significant concern to us this week is the portrayal of our community, that being people who experience and live with mental health issues. Many people within our community struggle with stigma and discrimination on a daily basis and are often portrayed by the media in an unfavourable light.

The recent media storm which has unfolded has not served any purpose to the portrayal of people who live with mental health issues. We feel it is important to reiterate at times like this, that people who live daily with mental health issues are generally at greater risk of victimisation rather than the perpetrators of crime as is portrayed through the media.

We ask that the media reconsider the sensationalisation of people living with mental health issues as being perpetrators of crime, and respect our community, the one in four people in our community who live with mental health issues.

It is a shameful thing that events like this need to occur in order to bring to the public's attention the failure of the current mental health system to provide adequate care to people living with mental health issues, many requiring support services in order to recover from their mental health issues and live meaningful and purposeful lives. It should not be tragedy that motivates change but a clear recognition of the suffering, and the needs of our community to have adequate supports and systems in place.

Often people who experience mental health issues are also at risk of harm from those who are tasked to provide supports for them. Whether this is because of the heavy-handed use of seclusion and restraint, the use of excessive force by police, or other emergency services workers, or through failure to provide adequate community supports.

We are awaiting with concern the results of the investigation into events leading up to this incident, initiated by NSW Health which was announced by the Hon. Bradley Hazzard, Minister for Health and Medical Research and the Hon. Bronwyn Taylor, Minister for Mental Health. We also look forward to seeing the results of investigations into the involvement of police services in the lead up to this tragic event that the Hon. Minister David Elliot, Minister for Police and Emergency Services has expressed his support for.

**Irene Gallagher – Chief Executive Officer**