



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

# MEDIA RELEASE

From Ms Georgie Crozier MP, Chair

10 October 2012

## **Low workforce participation and mental illness – Committee report tabled**

A report that addresses the issue of low workforce participation by people with mental illness has been tabled on World Mental Health Day by the Family and Community Development Committee.

The report highlights the personal, social and economic benefits of participation by people with mental illness in employment.

Committee Chair, Ms Georgie Crozier MP, said ‘The stigma associated with mental illness is a significant barrier to the employment of people with mental illness in the workplace. The workforce participation rate for people with mental illness is low (28.2%) in comparison with the rate for people with disability (53%) and people with no disability or mental illness (80.6%).’

The report recommends that the workforce participation rates of people with mental illness are improved by:

- Changing perceptions of mental illness in the workplace through an awareness raising campaign targeted specifically at workplaces.
- Preventing people with mental illness from leaving work and education prematurely through flexible course delivery in schools and more tailored support interventions.
- Creating diverse and flexible employment pathways for people with mental illness by increasing mental health literacy in workplaces and looking at supported employment opportunities.
- Fostering healthy and supportive workplaces that improve responses to work risks for mental health, such as bullying and job stress.
- Improving linkages between mental health and employment support services through the joint delivery of services.

Ms Crozier stated that ‘the Victorian Government has a key leadership role in increasing workforce participation rates by people with mental illness.’

The report recommends the need for an integrated mental health employment strategy that brings people with mental illness together with business, employment support services, mental health services, and the education sector.

- *For media queries by journalists, please contact Amanda Kennedy on 0409 890 658*