

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

AP countries join forces for mental health

Melbourne based consortium Asia Australia Mental Health and The Ministry of Health Indonesia will co-host health service leaders from 19 Asia Pacific countries at a two day meeting in Bali this week.

The Asia Pacific Community Mental Health Network was initiated by St. Vincents Health and University of Melbourne's Asia Australia Mental Health in 2005 and showcases best practice in delivering community mental health services for Asia Pacific countries, a growing area of concern for the region.

"The strength of this mental health network inspires best-practice models through partnerships across this enormous, diverse and fast developing region." says AAMH Co-Director Professor Chee Ng.

"It is remarkable the innovative ways that our regional colleagues are applying these very practical community-based models and rapidly influencing change", he said, "many countries are moving away from a purely medical model, recruiting traditional healers and religious leaders as partners in the treatment and rehabilitation of people who suffer from mental illnesses."

The Asia-Pacific delegates will join over a hundred mental health leaders from across Indonesia including Bali to examine the theme of this meeting - "Promoting Mental Health in the Community".

"We need to urgently tackle the stigma of mental illness, one of the biggest barriers we all face in doing this work," said Professor Ng

Over 450 million people worldwide suffer from mental, neurological and substance use disorders, according to WHO statistics. At any given time about one in four families has a member with a mental disorder.

The event will be launched by the Governor of Bali Made Mangku Pastika along with Australian Consul General The Hon Brett Farmer.

The symposium and workshop will be held in Bali, Indonesia on Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 September 2012. [Find out more here](#)

Formed in 2005 - the Asia-Pacific Community Mental Health Development Project has been led by [Asia Australia Mental Health](#) – a consortium of St Vincents Health, the University of Melbourne's Department of psychiatry – and Asialink.

The following are available for English-language comment

- [Prof Chee Ng](#) Associate Director, Asia Australia Mental Health
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