



*the lived experience*

President: The Hon Rob Knowles  
Vice President: The Hon Frank Walker QC  
Executive Director: Margaret Springgay  
PO Box 844  
Marleston South Australia 5033  
Tel: (08) 8221 5072 Fax: (08) 8221 5159  
web: mifa.org.au

October 31, 2005

**Letter of endorsement for the Proposal for the Establishment of  
The Australian Psychosis Research Network**

*"The future will depend on what we do in the present"  
Mahatma Gandhi*

The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia [MIFA] enthusiastically endorses the proposal to form an Australian Psychosis Research Network. The researchers in Australia investigating psychotic disorders are considered among the world leaders in the area. Significant and ground-breaking findings are contributing to the advancement of knowledge in this area of huge need within society.

MIFA, as a national body representing over 15,000 people across Australia, can testify to the crippling symptoms of psychotic disorders attacking young Australian people. This is at a time when they would otherwise be completing their education, commencing career pathways, establishing relationships and contributing to the community. The 15,000 members across Australia are mainly those directly affected by mental illness either as a carer or a consumer. The highest percentage of members is those affected by the psychotic disorders.

The MIFA member organisations, listed on this page, were formed at a time when there were little alternative programs for people with life-long disabling psychotic disorders. The burden of the care was carried by those closest to them – the carers; and remains so with approximately 50% of people with psychotic disorders and high levels of psychiatric disability still living with carers.

Those people with psychotic disorders and those who care for them remain hopeful that international research is making meaningful strides. There is a real potential for Australia to become a world leader in the field. This promises not only hope for those with the disorders, but real economic benefits by reducing welfare dependence and creating wealth for Australia by product development.

MIFA believes this proposal has great merit and should meet with approval by government.

Yours sincerely

Rob Knowles  
President

**MIFA members:**

**Mental Illness Fellowship of  
Nth Queensland Inc**

**Mental Illness Fellowship  
Victoria**

**Mental Illness Fellowship of  
South Australia Inc**

**Mental Illness Fellowship of  
Western Australia Inc**

**Mental Illness Fellowship of  
the ACT Inc**

**Schizophrenia Fellowship of  
New South Wales Inc**

**Schizophrenia Fellowship  
Queensland Inc**

**NT Assoc of Relatives &  
Friends of the Mentally Ill Inc**