



**MEDIA RELEASE** – for immediate release

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## **Spiritual Health Association speaks up at Mental Health Australia Parliamentary Advocacy Day**

Spiritual Health Association (SHA) is taking part in discussions today in Canberra at Parliament House with the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Emma McBride and other Ministers on the place of spiritual care in holistic person-centred care.

The Mental Health Australia Advocacy Day is a timely opportunity to highlight spiritual care as part of a global understanding of health and a critical aspect of care in supporting mental health<sup>1</sup>.

SHA calls for an Australian Government investment that enables Australians to have safer quality care in mental health by **building capacity for access to spiritual care services in clinical contexts**.<sup>2</sup>

Ensuring access to the spiritual domain of care enables people in clinical settings to draw upon their (self-defined) spirituality and develop vital coping strategies in times of mental distress that are foundational to their beliefs, values, and experiences of life.

Spiritual care services are present in many hospitals throughout Australia and respond to the distress and anguish of patients, their families and staff.

*“The routine daily question from staff included – do you have any suicidal thoughts? It’s not that I want to end my life, it’s more that I don’t know how to live. And at these moments you need someone outside of yourself to offer this to you, to reflect for you the value of your life, because you have stated that you don’t know how to walk forward with your life. This point of reflection is crucial. It is needed to coax you out of the darkness to see the beauty within yourself. This is the gift of spiritual care”.*

*Anonymous patient, Royal Melbourne Hospital, 2019*

Paying attention to the core sense of meaning and purpose, beliefs, values and practices of those receiving care supports authentic, safer care in mental health.

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**Spiritual Health Association is the peak body for spiritual care in the health sector.** For all media enquiries, contact Alicia Stafford, [communications@spiritualhealth.org.au](mailto:communications@spiritualhealth.org.au) / 0416 887 254

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (2021). *The Geneva Charter for Well-being*. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/the-geneva-charter-for-well-being>

<sup>2</sup> Spiritual Health Association (2022) *Call to Action: Make Health Care Whole*. <https://www.spiritualhealth.org.au/Call%20to%20Action%202022.pdf>