



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*Thursday 16 March 2017*

# **Photo exhibition at hospital documents experiences of mental illness**

A travelling exhibition of photographs documenting the recovery stories of people living with complex mental illness will go on display at Bathurst Hospital from Tuesday 4 April, 2017.

'*Stories of Recovery from the Bush*' was the result of a research partnership between the Benevolent Society, Western Sydney University and Western NSW Partners in Recovery, a group of key stakeholders working in mental health across NSW.

"We wanted to create a project that would be an empowering way of getting people living with complex mental illness to describe their experience of the mental health system in regional NSW and what has worked for them on their recovery journey," said Ms Amie Carrington, Manager at The Benevolent Society.

The research partnership between The Benevolent Society and Western Sydney University was conducted during 2015-2016 and involved participants telling their stories through one-to-one interviews and photographs taken with disposable cameras or other devices.

Participants from across western NSW, including Mudgee, Dubbo, Coonamble, Wellington, Rylstone and Barradine, were involved in the project and a selection of their work has been generously donated by participants for the roving exhibition in 2017.

There are more than 70 photographs in the exhibition from 10 artists, accompanied by text.

"The exhibition is a collection of photographs taken by the participants together with the written narrative of their experience and recovery journey," Ms Carrington said.

The exhibition has previously been in Dubbo and will go to Lithgow later this year.

The findings about what is helpful for people in mental health recovery have been published in a research report available on the Western Sydney University website at:

<http://handle.uws.edu.au:8081/1959.7/uws:35379>

**Members of the public are welcome to view the exhibition which continues at Bathurst Hospital until Tuesday 27 June.**

The exhibition is part of the arts and health program at Bathurst Hospital managed by regional arts development organisation Arts OutWest.