

AAWEsome collaboration to build world-first roadmap for wellness in entertainment

World Mental Health Day, Tuesday 10 October 2017:

Entertainment Assist has today announced the formation of the **Australian Alliance for Wellness in Entertainment (AAWE)** – a world-first, cross-sector initiative for shared interest in positive mental health and wellbeing behaviours for a sustainable Australian entertainment industry.

The **Australian Alliance for Wellness in Entertainment** is an Entertainment Assist peer-to-peer initiative to be implemented in collaboration with founding members:

- Arts Wellbeing Collective
- Ausdance National
- Australian Society for Performing Arts Healthcare
- Entertainment Assist
- Live Performance Australia
- Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance
- Music Australia
- Screen Producers Australia
- The Australian Council of Deans & Directors of Creative Arts

together with peak bodies, sector representatives, employers, employees and freelancers within Australia's live and recorded entertainment industry. AAWE's mental health partner is **Everymind** (formerly Hunter Institute for Mental Health).

In 2015, Entertainment Assist commissioned researchers at College of Arts, Victoria University, to undertake another world first: a comprehensive study of mental health across all sectors of the Australian entertainment industry. The findings revealed Australian entertainment industry professionals are in "severe distress".

The report, titled '*Working in the Australian Entertainment Industry: Final Report*' revealed troubling statistics compared to the general population:

- suicide attempts are more than double
- moderate to severe anxiety are 10 times higher
- and depression five times higher

The purpose of AAWE is to develop and action a Prevention First Framework for Mental Health in the Australian Entertainment Industry. An industry research study will be conducted in association with Everymind to inform the Framework. AAWE members will commit to a Statement of Values around respect, integrity, empathy, courage and collaborative leadership with an aim to providing advocacy, practical support and monitoring re the mental health and wellbeing of industry peers.

Entertainment Assist Patron, **Shane Jacobson**, stated, *"This is a huge win for our Australian entertainment industry. It's wonderful having all our disparate industry segments come together and support each other with a view to create change and build a more resilient, healthy Entertainment Industry"*.

Entertainment Assist Chairman, **David Mann OAM**, agrees. *"Convening the Wellness Alliance is Entertainment Assist's most significant initiative. Our research identified startling industry health problems – it is now the industry's joint responsibility to build a roadmap towards wellness", says Mann.*

"Entertainment Assist's vision is for mental health in the entertainment industry to be actively and openly addressed. AAWE is a game changing platform from which this vision can be realised - going one step further to address wellbeing through a "prevention first" lens. With industry leaders representing all sectors, AAWE's founding members commit to wellness in entertainment and ask all industry members to join AAWE and do the same. Goose bump moments don't get better than this!" says **Susan Cooper**, General Manager, Entertainment Assist and AAWE Convenor.

To inform the "Prevention First Framework", an invitation is extended to entertainment industry professionals, across all sectors, to have their say and attend nation-wide forums to identify existing wellness initiatives, engage in intra and cross sector communication and help prioritise key areas for systemic change.

Forums will be held in venues across the country from 13 November to 5 December 2017 and will consist of an industry wellness information session, followed by sector-based round table discussions. Seating is strictly limited. An online survey will be made available for those unable to attend.

To join AAWE and register attendance at one of the forums, visit www.entertainmentassist.org.au/wellness

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For media and general inquiries contact:

Susan Cooper

General Manager, Entertainment Assist/Convenor, Australian Alliance for Wellness in Entertainment

M: 0417 776 830 E: Susan.cooper@entertainmentassist.org.au

To access Promotional Photographs visit: <http://bit.ly/AAWEpic>

Background

Entertainment Assist, a health promotion charity, raises awareness about mental health in the Australian entertainment industry and utilises findings from its research to advocate for generational change. This includes: provision of tailored mental health training, educating Industry professionals to take care of self and support their peers; and encouraging industry employers to actively support the mental health and wellbeing of employees.

The full analysis of the research data and deeper explanations are detailed in the full report, which can be found at <https://www.entertainmentassist.org.au/our-research/>