Media release

Psychiatric medication: Tom Cruise’s ‘Mission Irresponsible’

Australians who use psychiatric medication are strongly advised not to make changes to their treatment and to see their health care professional if they have any concerns in light of recent comments by Tom Cruise about antipsychotic and antidepressant medications.

SANE Australia and The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) believe that all people with a mental illness have a right to the best possible clinical care to treat mental illness and its symptoms.

Barbara Hocking, Executive Director of SANE Australia, says: 'It is reckless and potentially dangerous of Mr Cruise to make uninformed comments about the treatment of mental illness; many people are well because medication plays an important role in managing their health.

‘Recovery from mental illness includes, psychological therapies, medication and support services in the community. The stigma and misunderstanding of mental illnesses, such as postnatal depression, prevents help-seeking behaviour for people who are unwell.’

Dr Julian Freidin, President of RANZCP, says: ‘Scientific research has clearly demonstrated that modern treatments for psychiatric illnesses – including medications - are safe and effective.

‘If people with a mental illness or their family members have any concerns, they should discuss them with their health professional.

‘The RANZCP has produced clinical guidelines which deal with six common mental illnesses. The guidelines are available on the RANZCP website (www.ranzcp.org).’

Mr Cruise’s comments should be seen in the context of his beliefs as a Scientologist, which opposes the medical treatment of mental illness by psychiatrists, including taking medication.

People who have questions about their medication can phone the SANE Helpline, Australia’s only Freecall helpline for information about mental illness, its treatment and referral to support services.

SANE Helpline 1800 688 382 and www.sane.org

For further comment:

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The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (www.ranzcp.org) is the principal organisation representing the medical specialty of psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand. There are currently 2600 Fellows of the College who account for approximately 85 per cent of all practicing psychiatrists in Australia and over 50 per cent of psychiatrists in New Zealand.

SANE Australia (www.sane.org) is a national charity working for a better life for people affected by mental illness.