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AUSTRALIAN FIRST AS ICARE BEGINS NEW FELLOWSHIP

In an Australian first, Insurance and Care NSW (icare) has partnered with the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry and the Northern Sydney Local Health District to establish three psychiatry fellowships in brain injury for advanced trainees. The Fellowships have been funded by the icare Foundation with \$1.5million over three years.

The fellowships aim to increase the capacity of specialist mental health services in NSW to support people with a brain injury and to formalise training of psychiatrists in this area

Until now, there hasn't been any specialist fellowship training available for psychiatrists in the area of brain injury in Australia.

"Mental health conditions are commonly experienced by people with brain injury and can often require specialist management. There are only a very small number of psychiatrists in NSW who specialise in this clinical area so we're hoping to change that," says Suzanne Lulham, General Manager Care & Community, icare.

Seventy per cent of icare's Lifetime Care participants have a brain injury and 50% of those have a mental health condition.

"We want to be able to address the complex behavioural and mental health needs and optimise the lives of participants with brain injury. The aim is that we will be able to support them as they go through their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community," Ms Lulham said.

Professor Leanne Togher from the Brain and Mind Centre at the University of Sydney said: "We look forward to using our telehealth expertise to work with the Psychiatry Fellows and our colleagues from the Northern Sydney Local Health District to find out whether tele-psychiatry might be an option for participants in rural and remote locations."

"By increasing the capacity of the current psychiatry workforce, it is hoped that people with traumatic brain injuries will receive the psychiatric care that they urgently need.

"The Brain and Mind Centre and the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Sydney are well known for their telehealth programs which make services available for people with brain injury and their families regardless of postcode," Professor Togher said.

The first of the fellowships began in February 2019 with a further two brain injury psychiatry fellowships available in 2020.

icare Lifetime Care and Support schemes provide treatment, rehabilitation and care services for people severely injured in motor vehicle accidents in NSW, regardless of fault.

Media contact: Sean Brogan | media@icare.nsw.gov.au | 0436 818 268