



MEDIA RELEASE

**PAUL LYNCH MP
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (MENTAL HEALTH)**

13 May 2008

Black Dog plays key role in mental health awareness

Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health) Paul Lynch today paid tribute to the Black Dog Institute for creating a growing awareness of mental health issues.

Mr Lynch used question time in NSW Parliament to talk about the Black Dog Institute Writing Competition.

“There has been a sea change in the community’s views about mental illness and those who suffer from it,” he told Parliament.

“For decades, the mentally ill were without a voice and without attention,” Mr Lynch said.

“The type of society we are in is judged, to some extent, by how we treat the powerless and the marginalised,” he said.

“On that basis, I believe we are doing a little better than we were perhaps five years ago,” Mr Lynch said.

“Professor Gordon Parker from the Black Dog Institute cited the five-year figure to me yesterday when I presented the prizes at the Institute’s literary awards,” he said.

“The essays and poems written by the sufferers of mood disorders and their families and friends speak eloquently of steps made to overcome the stigmatisation of mental illness,” Mr Lynch said.

He said the Lemna Government was also playing its part in delivering quality services to people with a mental illness through its record \$1.05 billion Budget.

Mr Lynch told Parliament that mental health had been ignored for too long by all levels of government on both sides of politics.

He said the Lemna Government’s funding would maintain the focus on mental health service delivery.

“It reflects a commitment to providing proper and appropriate treatment and prevention for those suffering from mental illness,” Mr Lynch said.

MEDIA CONTACT: Andrew Williams 0408 602 936

<http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/media/newsreleases/index.cfm>

13 May 2008