Health Minister Kon Vatskalis has welcomed 2010 Australian of the Year, Professor Patrick McGorry, at a reception at Parliament House, acknowledging his 27 year dedication to mental health.

“Professor McGorry is an internationally renowned and respected researcher and clinician committed to improving services and treatment for young people experiencing mental ill health,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“He has dedicated 27 years in the field of mental health, particularly in the area of youth mental health and the NT Government is honoured to have Dr McGorry in the Territory in the lead up to Mental Health Week next week.”

Dr McGorry is the Executive Director of youth mental health research organisation Orygen Youth Health, and is also a founding board member for Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

Headspace has two centres in the Territory offering support to young people between the ages of 12 and 25 with mental health and substance abuse issues.

“Mental Health is an issue for everyone, with one in five Australians experiencing a mental health problem and many more affected through their involvement with others in the community who may have a mental illness,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“The Territory Government is committed to the provision of quality services to both young people and adults requiring Mental Health Services.

“We have dramatically increased the Mental Health Budget from $16 million to over $42 million in 2010/11, and have introduced programs including a 24 hour mental health hotline and are building two secure care facilities.

“Mental Health Week – which kicks off nationally next week – provides an opportunity for us to consider our own mental wellbeing and to participate in activities being held in our community which seek to demystify mental illness.

“Since Professor McGorry was awarded Australian of the Year, mental health has been in the spotlight across Australia with wide recognition of the importance of further development of mental health support.”

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