



## **Conference to address how technology impacts mental health**

The issue of how the online world helps or hinders mental health will be addressed at a national award-winning conference in Melbourne this March.

The second Lantern Mental Health 2.0 Unconference on Friday March 2, will provide the mental health and community sectors with the opportunity to discuss how social media, the internet and technology impacts mental health.

“What are the advantages of this 'always connected' world? What are the dangers? What are the big issues? How can we use it to improve our mental health and mental health services?” asks Lantern CEO Janet Hopkins.

“Social media is here and - whether we accept it or not – it is a part of our world. Australians are one of the biggest users of social media with over 10 million users of Facebook and YouTube<sup>1</sup> alone. This brings with it many possibilities for changing the way we can offer support to those with mental illness. It also brings with it much publicised challenges... ”

Last year’s event proved extremely helpful to the health and mental health sectors as technology experts shared advice on new media and e-health solutions.

“Many of us in the community service and mental health sectors are running to catch up with technology. It is critical that services get their heads around the way e-health and new technologies are being incorporated into supporting and helping people with mental health concerns.”

Ms Hopkins says, “I am concerned about the increased sense of isolation people with mental health concerns may face if they are not being able to keep up with the internet and social media, adding digital exclusion to the other barriers they also struggle with.”

An ‘Unconference’ differs from a standard conference as the event is self-organising: participants create the program themselves on the day.

The first Lantern Mental Health 2.0 Unconference, held in 2011, was recognised with a Special Judges Award in The Australia and New Zealand Mental Health Service 2011 Achievement Awards.

The second Lantern Mental Health 2.0 Unconference will be held in Albert Park on Friday 2 March. To book tickets, follow the online prompts on [lantern.org.au](http://lantern.org.au)

Lantern is a Community Managed Mental Health Service operating in Melbourne, Australia. Lantern is focused on ‘lighting the way’ for those who have mental

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.socialmedianews.com.au/social-media-statistics-australia-december-2011/>

illness. The emphasis is on hope – a positive, self-generated future. Our services include face to face support, activities, education and information.

**Please note:**

- Lantern Mental Health 2.0 Unconference 2012 is on Friday March 2, 2012 at Gasworks Arts Park, Albert Park, Melbourne.
- Media passes are available.
- Janet Hopkins is available for interview.
- More about Lantern – [www.lantern.org.au](http://www.lantern.org.au)
- <http://www.lantern.org.au/lantern-mental-health-2-0/>
- Lantern on twitter – [www.twitter.com/lantermh](http://www.twitter.com/lantermh)
- For more information or to request an interview please contact: Lynda Collins on (03) 9093 5977