



**SHOUT Inc**  
**Self Help Organisations United Together**  
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Patron: *Jon Stanhope AO*

Wednesday 22 Feb 2017

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7AM, THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2017**

**Shout Out for SHOUT**

SHOUT (Self Help Organisations United Together) is facing immediate closure if it does not receive a response to requests for future funding from the ACT Health Minister. SHOUT is an umbrella organisation that has been providing vital support to over 47 self help and peer support groups for people with disabilities, health and chronic conditions for over 35 years.

SHOUT is a not-for-profit organisation that provides self help and support groups in the ACT with infrastructure, support services, room hire, and high level administrative support. A number of these groups are small community organisations entirely managed by volunteers which provide a lifeline to people with health conditions. Many would be unable to stay open without SHOUT's backend support.

'We first commenced discussions with ACT Health in August 2016, culminating with the submission of a funding proposal to ACT Health to ensure the future of this vital organisation' said Rebecca Davey, Board member of SHOUT. 'SHOUT has been promised feedback on this proposal since December, and despite weekly calls to the Minister's office, we are still unable to gain a response either way as to whether ACT Health will consider our funding proposal in any way.'

SHOUT was originally conceived by the joining of many self help groups that were seeking individual grants from Government to buy basic office equipment to assist in the running of their otherwise self-sufficient organisations. The late John Knight thought it would be much better if these organisations united and shared resources, lessening the burden on Government to provide small grants to many different organisations.

Today, SHOUT provides a home to ACT Down Syndrome Association, Motor Neurone Disease NSW/ACT, Bosom Buddies ACT (breast cancer support), Friends of Brain Injured Children, People with Disabilities ACT, Brain Tumour Alliance Australia and ACT ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Society. A number of these groups have indicated that they may not be able to continue if SHOUT were to close. In addition, it maintains affordable meeting rooms for its non-tenancy members as well as a repository of support structures and information smaller organisations can tap into.

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**ACT Down Syndrome Association - ACT ME/CFS Society - ACT/NSW Motor Neurone Disease Association  
Brain Tumour Alliance Australia - Bosom Buddies ACT - Canberra & Queanbeyan ADD Support Group  
Canberra Region Kidney Support Group - Friends of Brain Injured Children ACT - Heart Support Australia (ACT Branch)  
Parkinson's ACT - People With Disabilities (ACT) - Prostate Cancer Support Group ACT Region  
Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation**

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**Self Help Organisations  
United Together**

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‘We have gone to ACT Health to seek ongoing base funding as our services have been most recently funded through Disability ACT, but due to the changes with the introduction of the NDIS, Disability ACT will no longer function in the next financial year.’ Ms Davey explains. ‘We are also in a situation whereby many of our services are actually health funded services, not disability services, and we believe ACT Health should be funding SHOUT for this part of our service delivery. If they don’t, those individual services will be returning to ACT Health seeking substantial increases in their funding to fund the basic needs of their organisations including rent, phone systems and IT.’

SHOUT was intending to seek funding for its disability based services, however as the funding rounds for these grants have only recently opened, SHOUT is concerned funding decisions will not be made until it is too late. ‘The Board of SHOUT cannot operate insolvent’, explains Ms Davey. ‘Even if we were to gain funding through the ILC grant process, it is unlikely that funding required to pay rent and staff will be provided in time to keep the organisation afloat. This situation also does not address the fact that many of our organisations are health organisations, not disability organisations.’

Self help as a tool in both health and disability care has been shown to be cost effective. Self help and support groups provide people with information, mutual support, services, resources, advocacy and tools to self-manage their lives. Self help groups also provide an extended social support system that is essential to the wellbeing of people and their families.

SHOUT will be meeting with its member organisations on Thursday to discuss the ramifications of the lack of response from the ACT Health Minister, and to encourage them and their communities to put a ‘shout out for SHOUT’.

## Ends

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