

Friday, 18 July 2008

HEALTH EXPERT TO HELP THE VULNERABLE

The Attorney-General Michael Atkinson has announced the appointment of leading health expert Dr John Brayley as Public Advocate.

Dr Brayley will start his five-year appointment on Monday, taking over from John Harley, who resigned earlier this year after serving nine years as Public Advocate.

“Dr Brayley is a perfect fit for this demanding but rewarding position,” Mr Atkinson said.

Dr Brayley is a Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry at Flinders University and a consultant for health services in S.A. and interstate. He was formerly the Director of Mental Health in S.A.’s Department of Health and the Chief Adviser in Psychiatry to the Mental Health Minister. For the past year, he’s been an honorary adviser to the Social Inclusion Board.

The Public Advocate is an independent official who can advise people with a mental incapacity on their rights and provide them with representation.

“Dr Brayley is noted for promoting the interests of vulnerable people, their families and carers. For more than a decade, he’s been a strong ally for those facing mental illness, disability and homelessness,” Mr Atkinson said.

In addition to giving one-on-one help, the Advocate reviews programs and systems in the Government, non-Government and community sectors to identify improvements that can be made.

“The Rann Government is drastically reforming the mental health system to achieve better outcomes for individuals and the public. Dr Brayley’s knowledge of those changes and his ample experience in the health sector will be instrumental in reaching those goals,” Mr Atkinson said.

At the centre of Dr Brayley’s work will be ensuring dignity for people who are disadvantaged as a result of mental illness or disability.

“Often, people with a mental incapacity fall through the gaps because they don’t get the support they need to make important decisions. This can leave them even more vulnerable and disconnected from society,” Dr Brayley said.

“I see this role as a chance to connect people to the support that’s available whether it be guiding them through processes or paving the way for change,”

“I’d like to thank Mr Harley for his hard work as Public Advocate and wish Dr Brayley all the best in his efforts to help the most vulnerable South Australians,” Mr Atkinson said.