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MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Filling gaps in post traumatic mental health: Victorian psychologist awarded prestigious national Fellowship

Improving the psychological treatment of people suffering from post-traumatic mental health problems is the goal of Melbourne psychologist, Ms Anne-Laure Couineau, who has just received a NICS Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Ms Couineau, a Senior Lecturer and Clinical Specialist at the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, University of Melbourne, will use the NICS Fellowship to undertake a two-year implementation project to address the gap between evidence and best practice in assessing and treating post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

“More than 50 per cent of Australians will experience at least one traumatic event in their lives. A proportion will develop PTSD as a result of these events and in any one year, up to 1/4 million Australians will experience this potentially chronic condition. Without appropriate intervention, PTSD can lead to drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety and depression,” explains Ms Couineau.

“In Australia, there are well recognised assessment and treatment options available in evidence-based guidelines but they’re not always used” she added.

NHMRC Chief Executive Officer, Professor Warwick Anderson has welcomed this opportunity. “We congratulate Ms Couineau on her Fellowship. The guideline recommendations she’ll be implementing through this project have been endorsed by the NHMRC and will make an important contribution to improving the services offered to traumatised people.”

Ms Couineau will join nine other health professionals from Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia as 2008 NICS Fellows.

Release ends.

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For more information about the other NICS Fellows and the NICS Leadership Program :
www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

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Note to editors

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research. As part of the NHMRC, the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS) works to improve health care by getting health and medical research into practice.

The NICS Leadership program, which was launched in 2003, directly contributes to closing evidence-practice gaps by supporting health professionals to undertake practical projects that aim to improve health outcomes for people by getting high quality evidence into everyday clinical practice in particular health settings.

The two-year, part-time Fellowships are open to early- to mid-career health professionals across the health care spectrum, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics, health care managers, and policy makers.

The Fellowships provide an annual stipend as well as professional development opportunities, training programs in evidence implementation, mentorship, and opportunities to network with and learn from world-class experts who come to Australia as part of NICS' Visiting Experts program.

Applications for NICS Fellowships 2009 open at the end of May 2008.