

Abstract

# The Universal Basic Income and Mental Health in Australia

## An Awareness Raising Campaign Plan.

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Universal Basic Income (UBI) has become an increasingly discussed approach to government welfare in the 21st century. Rather than social welfare payments being means tested, a UBI consists of governments directly paying every member of society a monthly income allowance to ensure basic sustenance (Fouksman, 2018). Common arguments for the UBI position it as a response to predicted labour market disruptions and subsequent unemployment, catalysed by increasing automation and diffusion of artificial intelligence (Lehdonvirta, 2017). However, parallel to the potential for UBI to counteract job insecurity are questions surrounding its capacity to ameliorate the burden of disease associated with socioeconomic disadvantage. The population prevalence of a range of non-communicable diseases are sensitive to a social gradient, whereby a greater burden of disease can be found at each step down a socioeconomic hierarchy (Blas et al., 2011; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010; Marmot, 2014). Thus, the potential for the UBI to partially alleviate some socioeconomic deprivation could deliver widespread public health benefits. Specifically, this project is interested in assessing what impact a secure income, delivered via the mechanism of Universal Basic Income, may, or may not, have on the population prevalence of mental illness and mental ill-health in Australia, and to translate these findings into an awareness-raising campaign plan.