

Liz Everard (Hocking Fellow 2019-2020)

“The aim of my project is to research therapeutic farm communities in America and Ireland that provide psychiatric treatment and a full continuum of care for adults living with complex mental illness” says Liz. “The purpose of this research to explore how this model of care could be delivered in Australia as it is my mission to establish a care farm in Tasmania for people with complex mental illness.”

For her project Liz will travel to the USA and Ireland in April/May 2020 to visit three therapeutic farm communities that provide housing options, psychiatric treatment and a full continuum of care for adults living with complex mental illness. Instead of a hospital or clinical setting, treatment is provided on a farm and participants are part of a community.

“I start my journey in Ohio and visit Hopewell, located on a 300-acre farm in Mesopotamia. Hopewell is a therapeutic community that provides a farm-based residential treatment program for adults with severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, and major depression.

I then travel to Massachusetts to visit Gould Farm, the oldest residential therapeutic community in America set on a 700-acre working farm that offers a full continuum of care for up to 76 participants. The unique aspect of Gould Farm is that residents, staff and their families live on the property and are all part of one community. I particularly want to learn about Gould Farm’s community model and see firsthand how families and friends of staff and participants are valued and included in the treatment model.

From the USA, I then travel to Ireland where I will visit Slí Eile, which in English means ‘another way’ and is based in County Cork. Slí Eile provides a supportive, recovery focused living environment for people experiencing mental health difficulties. Slí Eile operates through two non-profit charitable companies. One provides accommodation as a housing association. The other provides a variety of individual and group support services and facilitates people’s involvement in a range of social enterprises.

In the 12 months that I am a Hocking Fellow, I will produce a final report and present my project findings at the International Mental Health Conference in July 2020 on the Gold Coast and the Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference Perth in August 2020.

I will be sharing my project on the [Care Farming Australia Facebook Page](#) and hope that people will enjoy following my journey and support me in my vision for this model of care to become a much-needed alternative approach to mental health recovery alongside the mainstream system. I’m grateful and thrilled to have this unique opportunity.”

[Watch the video](#)

