A Christmas message from the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

As Christmas draws near and 2012 comes to a close, I would like to thank you for the work you have done over the past 12 months.

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is that I get to meet so many of the people that work within the Ministry of Health and across our Local Health Districts. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you over the course of the year and I must say that I am always struck by the compassion, dedication and professionalism of our State’s health workforce. This is reinforced whenever I speak to people who have been in contact with the health system and they tell me of the high regard they have for the wonderful work that you do.

As Christmas is a time of reflection, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly draw on our achievements together in mental health and healthy lifestyles over the course of the past 12 months. It’s been a busy year. We delivered a record level of funding to mental health services and infrastructure, established the NSW Mental Health Commission, opened the Office of Preventative Health and launched a ten year plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the State’s Aboriginal people.

We have also worked hard to close the gap in metropolitan and regional mental health services. As a regionally based Member of Parliament who sees the consequences of this divide all too often, this is particularly important to me and I was pleased this year to launch a number of initiatives that will start to reduce this gap, such as the mental health line and the State-wide Outreach Perinatal Service.

I am proud of what we have achieved together. However, the most important thing that we can continue to do is give mental health the prominence and attention it deserves. In doing so we can turn the tide on the stigma that still surrounds mental illness.

The work you do is professionally, and sometimes personally, challenging. Your empathy, ability and desire to help many of the most vulnerable in our communities are the reasons why we have one of the best health services in the world.

I wish you, your family and friends a peaceful Christmas and happy New Year. I look forward to working with you in 2013.

HON. KEVIN HUMPHRIES MP
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