



The Hon Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 26 April 2012

WORKING TOGETHER TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF HOSPITALISATION AND HOMELESSNESS

As part of a new National Partnership Agreement (NP) on Mental Health, the Commonwealth will provide the NSW Government with \$57.6 million over 5 years for three new projects that will improve the care and support provided to people living with severe mental illness.

Under the NP, NSW is receiving the largest share of funding of all states and territories.

The agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW will mean more services and support for people with a mental illness who frequently present at emergency departments, or who risk cycling in and out of institutional settings.

The following projects will receive Commonwealth funding:

- \$35.2 million for the expansion of the existing NSW Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) to enable more people to live in the community in stable and secure accommodation, with links to clinical mental health and rehabilitation services for people who require 16 or 24 hour support.
- \$12.3 million for the provision of intensive, family focussed support to mothers with mental illness and their children to keep them together, through the provision of high, medium and low packages of care and short term housing.
- \$10.2 million for in-reach support services to boarding house residents who have been assessed as having mental health issues, through the provision of 200 continuous and ongoing new low support packages.

Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, said the NP was a key feature of the Government's \$2.2 billion mental health package.

"Our agreement with NSW will ensure we respond better to the needs of people with severe and debilitating mental illness so they stay well and lead functional lives," Mr Butler said.

"Together, we're investing in projects that break new ground and expanding existing services that we know work well. For example, one of the projects we're funding will ensure that more mothers living with mental illness and their children get intensive, family focussed support and access to stable accommodation.

“Parenting behaviour and the mother-baby relationship is incredibly important to shaping a child’s future health and wellbeing. Providing care and support that responds flexibly to what families need ensures mothers living with mental illness are supported to recover and that their children get the best possible start in life.”

NSW Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries, said that this agreement was just one example of the ways that the NSW Government is working with the Commonwealth to deliver better services for the people of NSW.

“The NSW Government has made a strong commitment to ensuring that people with mental health problems do not cycle in and out of homelessness and the acute hospital system,” Mr Humphries said.

“We know that people have the best chance of recovery when they are supported in a stable community-based environment.

“This partnership with the Commonwealth provides a great opportunity to extend NSW’s established and innovative HASI model to reach more people.

“These initiatives are significant because they target some of the most marginalised and vulnerable in our communities.

“This partnership demonstrates that improving mental health care requires both Governments to work together to ensure that investment is targeted where it is needed and toward a shared plan.

“As NSW’s first ever Mental Health Minister, I’m proud to be working alongside Minister Butler to address this serious problem and support people whose lives have been touched by mental illness.”

States and Territories play an integral role in providing acute care, housing and accommodation, education and social supports for people with a mental illness.

While some states have made significant improvements to their mental health care system, the range and type of services that are available across the country continues to vary.

The NP will help address service gaps and assist more Australians living with mental illness to secure and maintain stable accommodation and support that they need to stay well and break the hospital cycle.

Requests for tenders for the initiatives for will be advertised on the NSW Government e-tendering website <https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/health/> in May 2012. Interested parties may register on the site to receive email notifications when new tenders are published.