



The Hon Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 25th July, 2012

JOHN FENELEY NAMED STATE'S FIRST MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONER

NSW Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries today announced the appointment of John Feneley as the inaugural Commissioner of the NSW Mental Health Commission.

Mr Humphries said Mr Feneley's appointment to lead the Commission was a major milestone in the NSW Government's on-going mental health reforms.

"The Mental Health Commission is one of the most important mental health reforms in the State's history," Mr Humphries said.

"It will drive a more accountable and efficient mental health system and, most importantly, enhance the mental health and well-being of the people of NSW.

"The Commissioner will deliver strategic direction for mental health in NSW, ensure services are appropriately designed and targeted, and review, monitor and report to the Government, the Parliament and the public on how the system is working, to ensure we are using funding effectively to deliver real results."

Mr Feneley brings to the position extensive experience within the mental health sector as Deputy President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal and through mental health policy and law reform work as Assistant Director General NSW Attorney Generals Department.

He has also served on the Board of the Schizophrenia Fellowship and government Boards and committees such as the Youth Justice Advisory Committee, the Child Death Review Team and the Legal Profession Admission Board. Mr Feneley is also a former Deputy Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

"The Commissioner's broad experience and expertise as a legal professional and mental health advocate will ensure the Commission is an independent, passionate and authoritative champion for mental health," Mr Humphries said.

Chair of the National Mental Health Commission, Professor Allan Fels, welcomed Mr Feneley's appointment and said he looked forward to working with him to develop a single plan for the future of mental health delivery in NSW that the State and Federal Governments can invest in.

"I expect the work of the NSW Commission will complement and enhance the work of the National Commission, with myself and Mr Feneley working closely together to ensure our efforts to improve mental health outcomes are coordinated," Mr Fels said.

NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, said that since coming into Government the NSW Liberals & Nationals have led the country when it comes to reforming the way mental health services are delivered.

“The NSW Government came into office with a powerful mandate from the community to address the health needs of the people of NSW,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The Government's reform agenda is about getting the right structures to deliver better health and mental health care and the Minister for Mental Health and I are committed to the development of a world-class health service that meets the needs of the community.”

Mr Feneley has been appointed as Commissioner of the NSW Mental Health Commission for a period of five years and will begin on 1st August 2012.

Mr Humphries said the first role of the Commission will be to prepare a draft strategic plan for the mental health system in NSW for the Government's consideration that will consider how it can better manage the experience of people with mental illness, their families and carers.

“The creation of the Mental Health Commission and the appointment of the Commissioner demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to serious and meaningful reform in the extremely important field of mental health and to improving the lives of people touched by mental illness,” Mr Humphries said.