



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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REPORT BACKS NSW GOVERNMENT'S EXTENSION OF MENTAL HEALTH HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

NSW Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries, today announced the release of a report into the innovative and highly successful Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) program, which supports people with mental illness to live independently in the community, maintain stable public housing and recover from their illness.

Mr Humphries said the *Final Report of the Evaluation of the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative* has affirmed the NSW Government's decision to extend the established and innovative HASI model to reach more people throughout the State.

"The report found that by ensuring people with a severe mental illness have access to affordable, safe and stable public housing they had a far greater chance of living fulfilling and successful lives in their communities and overcoming their illness," Mr Humphries said.

"The NSW Government agrees with the recommendation that HASI needs to expand and evolve, and we have already made significant progress in ensuring the program reaches out to more people in need.

"Earlier this year I announced a new partnership with the Commonwealth that will see \$35 million invested into HASI to enable more people in NSW to access housing and lead functional lives, particularly those with a mental illness who are cycling in and out of hospitals and at risk of homelessness, new mothers, and boarding house residents.

"We know that people with a mental illness have the best chance of recovery when they are supported in a stable community-based environment and we will continue to look at ways we can extend the HASI model to reach more people and improve social connectedness among people with a mental illness."

Among the key findings in the report, conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW, include:

- Hospitalisation rates were reduced for 84 per cent of participants, and time spent in hospital and emergency departments decreased by 81 per cent, saving over \$30 million in hospital costs.
- Community participation improved, with 94 per cent of participants forming friendships, 73 per cent participating in social and community activities and 43 per cent working and/or studying.
- Most HASI clients successfully maintained their tenancy (90 per cent), and made particularly good tenants, who overwhelmingly pay their rent on time, maintain their property and are good neighbours.

"We are committed to ensuring the HASI program provides more options for people with mental illness while ensuring that this support reflects the diverse and evolving needs of HASI clients," Mr Humphries said.

To view the report visit:

http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Final_report_and_Appendix.pdf