



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 16th December 2013

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD IN REFORMING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

NSW Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries, today officially opened two properties in Carlingford which will provide vital housing and mental health support for some of the most vulnerable people across the State.

Mr Humphries said the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) Plus Program will reach people throughout the State, not just in Sydney and highlights the NSW Government's commitment to improve mental health outcomes for people right across NSW.

Mr Humphries joined Attorney General and Member for Epping, Greg Smith MP, Member for Castle Hill, Dominic Perrottet MP, and Member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee MP at the Uniting Care Mental Health site to opening the service, which will provide housing and round-the-clock mental health and social support for some of the most vulnerable and marginalised in our community.

"We know that people with a severe mental illness have the best chance of recovery when they are supported in a stable community-based environment close to their family and friends," Mr Humphries said.

"Without this support many are more likely to return to hospital care or come into contact with the criminal justice system.

"This program is about supporting people with mental illness to develop their independence and resilience, to connect with community members and to share positive experiences while receiving the support they need to manage their illness," he said.

"On coming into Government, we made a commitment to divert more people with mental health problems away from the criminal justice system and towards the services they need. HASI Plus is an important component of this, providing vulnerable people who have already been incarcerated with the mental health support to need to get their lives back on track."

Also joining Mr Humphries was Roger the Greyhound, a new addition to the Uniting Care team and a first for mental health recovery services. Roger is as Therapy Dog, retrained by Greyhounds as Pets, and adopted by Uniting Care to help residents with their recovery based on the strong evidence that animal-assisted recovery can improve social connectedness, communication and engagement, lift mood and improve self-esteem.

HASI Plus will build on the success of the HASI program, which recognises the strong links between stable housing, accommodation support services and clinical mental health services to help people live full, independent and satisfying lives.

The service will be delivered in partnership with Western Sydney Local Health District, BreakThru People Solutions and WentWest Medicare Local, and will provide 10 16-hour and 10 24-hour care support packages in the Western Sydney region.