



**Jai Rowell MP**  
Minister for Mental Health  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY TURNS SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH AS PART OF “LIVING WELL” FORUM**

Newcastle residents will be offered some expert advice on how to build resilience and overcome adversity, including the challenges posed by mental illness, as part of the “Living Well” forum being staged at Newcastle City Hall this evening.

Speaking ahead of the event, Minister for Mental Health Jai Rowell said he was delighted to not only be participating in the event, but also to see such a strong community effort to remove the stigma often associated with mental illness.

“This forum sends a fantastic message to the Newcastle Community that yes, life does throw up some challenges – particularly for those living with mental illness – but we should never think of these challenges as insurmountable,” Mr Rowell said.

“Mental illness is an issue that we have to approach as a united community, and it is inspiring to see a community like Newcastle take such a proactive approach.

“People often feel isolated when they are facing tough times, so for those experiencing mental illness to not only know what services are out there to support them, but also that they have a whole community looking out for their best interests is really empowering.”

The forum, organised by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health, aims to provide top tips on how to conquer life’s challenges, particularly for those affected by mental illness.

Among the well-known speakers addressing the forum will be Newcastle Knights coach and rugby league legend, Wayne Bennett, who will provide attendees with tips on overcoming adversity, and prominent ABC sports broadcaster Craig Hamilton, who will detail his personal experience living with mental illness.

Attendees will also be presented with expert advice from Director of Hunter Institute of Mental Health, Jaelea Skehan, who will outline what assistance is available locally for those living with mental illness.

While the event will provide a strong focus on mental health, organisers have also worked to ensure a range of advice is provided for all those interested in living a better balanced life, catering for individuals, families, sports groups, workplaces and those who have recovered from mental illness.