



## **Pru Goward**

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Medical Research

Assistant Minister for Health

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday, 14 July, 2016

### **STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN WAGGA WAGGA**

Minister for Mental Health Pru Goward and Member for Wagga Wagga Daryl Maguire announced a number of key mental health initiatives in Wagga Wagga during a visit to Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital today.

Ms Goward announced Aftercare as the successful tenderer of a \$2.3 million tender to deliver the innovative LikeMind mental health program in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District.

“The new LikeMind hub is an innovative way of co-locating and connecting government and non-government services to provide mental health care including triage, assessment, care coordination and discharge planning services,” Ms Goward said.

“The NSW Government strongly values the partnerships it has with the non-government sector, and the support and collaboration that the sector provides. LikeMind is a great opportunity to demonstrate how well these partnerships can work.”

Mr Maguire said a major strength of LikeMind is that anyone can walk-in to the service without an appointment or a referral from a health practitioner or organisation.

“This is great news for the local community. By bringing together local partners that specialise in mental health, drug & alcohol, physical health and social needs, we’re making sure people get access to the integrated help they need locally,” Mr Maguire said.

The LikeMind site in Wagga Wagga is the fourth in NSW, and the second in rural and regional New South Wales following the LikeMind Orange site which is due to be launched in August 2016. Two existing LikeMind sites in Penrith and Seven Hills have been operational since 2015.

While in Wagga Wagga, Ms Goward also visited the Mental Health Recovery Unit at the Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital where mental health consumers will get hands on experience in planning and preparing their own healthy meals from next month.

“It was great to see firsthand the enthusiasm and excitement everyone had to learn practical skills in making healthy food choices including meal planning, shopping and good preparation skills, all of which will help them lead a healthy life in the future,” Ms Goward said.

Mr Maguire said: “I am very impressed by the innovative work of the dedicated staff in the Recovery Unit at Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital; they do excellent work to ensure mental health consumers are supported to recover and are equipped with skills to help them live well in the community once they leave the unit.”

Ms Goward also visited patients in the new Specialist Mental Health Service for Older People beds which opened in May 2016.

Ms Goward said: “These eight new beds provide older mental health consumers with a safe environment that is staffed by specialists like old age psychiatrists, specialist psycho-geriatric nurses and allied health professionals who have expertise in mental health problems affecting older people.”

Mr Maguire said: “I am pleased that older people needing inpatient treatment for a mental illness will now have access to dedicated, aged care beds in Wagga Wagga.”