

MEDIA RELEASE

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ROMA HEADSPACE TO BENEFIT FROM ADDITIONAL FUNDING UNDER NEW COMMONWEALTH MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

LOCALLY LED: Federal Government's increased funding announcement means new centre will have greater local focus.

Reducing the incidence and severity of mental illness in South West Queensland has been given a major boost with the announcement of increased funding for a stand-alone "headspace" centre in Roma.

The Commonwealth announced funding for a headspace in Roma last year, but yesterday committed to the creation of an expanded centre with an enhanced ability to address local needs.

"Absolutely amazing," was the reaction by Roma Credentialed Mental Health Nurse Deb Garrett to the funding announcement, which will see \$6.3 million spent on the Roma headspace project over the next 5 years.

"I've been working in mental health in Roma since 2009, and where I work I would see 1 in 3, sometimes 1 in 2 patients presenting with a mental health issue at the practice," Mrs Garrett said.

"All the evidence shows that if you can tackle the issue in young people, you can dramatically change outcomes for adults, who in this region often don't have the funds or ability to travel to seek care."

"The headspace model is fantastic and this is just incredible for this community; very exciting," she said.

Beginning in 2006, headspace is a national initiative designed to provide mental health and wellbeing support for 12 to 25 year olds with a focus on early intervention, based on research that 75% of mental health issues develop before a person turns 25.

The headspace announcement is part of the Federal Government's \$64 million investment in suicide prevention and mental health, backing calls by experts for a fundamental shift in approach, including a greater focus on at risk groups and those with lived-experience to help co-design programs.

"What's so good about this announcement is that we're now able to build a service for young people that is tailored to the unique needs of the Maranoa and designed from input from the community, especially Young People," Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN) CEO Stuart Gordon said.

"It will aim to capitalise on established mental health and wellbeing services and infrastructure and provide a keen focus on exactly what locals need, administered by people who already work in the community and know its DNA back to front."

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The WQPHN already commissions a headspace centre in Mount Isa, and will now commence the process of planning for the development of the new centre in Roma including the identification of an experienced service provider to deliver the program.

“This process will include community consultation, exploring the opportunities in the region to deliver the workforce, but crucially ensuring it’s integrated with existing local services so that the centre is plugged into the right referral networks to cover all the bases for young people with mental health and wellbeing issues,” Stuart Gordon said.

“The Maranoa has all the building blocks necessary for a really vibrant program, and we’re thrilled that this announcement means a bigger and better facility due to the additional resources that have been made available,” Mr Gordon said.

“headspace” currently has more than 110 centres in Australia that have been accessed by young people on more than 3 million occasions since their inception.

Western Qld Primary Health Network (WQPHN) quick facts:

- commissions (or funds) health services in Western Queensland
- covers almost one million square kilometres of Queensland, 55% of the state’s total land area
- aligns health investment with demonstrated population health needs
- uses health intelligence data to orientate health services efficiently and effectively
- ensures the right primary health care is delivered, at the right time by the right provider
- advised by GPs and other health professionals and consumers
- one of 31 PHNs across Australia established and funded by the Commonwealth Government

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