

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## RHEALTH NAMED AS SUCCESSFUL BIDDER FOR NEW ROMA HEADSPACE CENTRE

**OPENING DATE: March 2021** earmarked as opening date for Roma's new mental health space for young people.

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A major milestone in the establishment of the Maranoa's first stand-alone headspace centre has been achieved with the selection of RHealth as the successful bidder for the project.

Specialising in delivering health services to regional, rural and remote Queensland for the past 25 years, RHealth was today named as the lead agency responsible for delivering the centre.

"RHealth is no stranger to the South West where they have a long history of working in and around General Practice but also in mental health, so they're ideally positioned to be part of this exciting project," WQPHN CEO Stuart Gordon said.

"There can only be one winner, but without exception all the other bidders passed on their congratulations, which typifies the team mentality and collaborative nature of service providers in the West, all willing each other to succeed."

"The beauty of having this hub site in Roma is it will be informed by the unique nature of the region, from the needs of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to the grazing industry, to FIFO workers, but with a focus on young people in what we call a place-based commissioning approach," Mr Gordon said.

RHealth already operates a headspace in Warwick on the Darling Downs and is grateful for the opportunity to realise their long-held goal of opening a headspace in Roma.

"RHealth has long been involved with the Roma community and we have experience in delivering a rural headspace model, so we look forward to applying our skills in collaboration with the WQPHN and headspace National," RHealth Limited President Dr Ross Hetherington said.

"Our purpose is to support the health and wellbeing of communities, with our passion being regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland, acknowledging the valuable role that WQPHN plays in commissioning services in this region."

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.

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Maranoa MP David Littleproud said the new headspace centre was a top priority, with young people across the region to benefit from increased access to mental health services in the bush.

“Support for young people and mental health is one of the biggest issues raised with me and that’s why this new centre is so important,” Mr Littleproud said.

“headspace works closely with young people at a crucial time in their lives to help get them on track and strengthen their ability to manage their mental health in the future.”

“I’m proud to have secured \$5.1 million over four years in Federal Government funding towards this important project which will give youth in Maranoa a safe place to turn to, and greater access to the support services they need.”

Maranoa Regional Council Mayor Tyson Golder agrees tackling mental health issues early in life is key.

“Obviously there are lots of challenges with mental health, as the world speeds up I think we miss connections between each other, so getting people in the younger age group to be able to have someone to connect with and sort things out is going to be great for the Shire,” Mr Golder said.

“Sometimes doorways need to open for people to want to go and see someone, so it's wonderful that the people of Maranoa will have that service now for that younger age group.”

“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.

#### **Recent national headspace survey results (conducted during or emerging from COVID lockdown):**

- One third of young Australians (34%) report high or very high levels of psychological distress, higher among young women, than young men.
- One in two young people (51%) were unable to carry out their daily activities on at least one day in the previous 2 weeks (41% in 2018).
- Rates of coping or ‘dealing with life’ have significantly dropped among 12-14 year olds (72% cope well in 2018, down to 63% in 2020), and among 22-25 year olds (54% cope well in 2018, down to 47% in 2020).

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