

Media Release

Mr Steve Dimopoulos MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier
Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health



Wednesday, 14 July 2021

NEW MENTAL HEALTH COACHING SERVICE FOR NORTH EAST VICTORIA

Victorians living in North East Victoria seeking support for their mental health and well-being will be able to be cared for in their own communities, thanks to a new mental health coaching service developed by Beyond Blue and supported by the Andrews Labor Government.

Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health Steve Dimopoulos was joined by the Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes in Beechworth today where the NewAccess program is now supporting people with mild to moderate anxiety and or depression.

NewAccess is an early intervention coaching program, designed to provide free, accessible, quality services for anyone finding it hard to manage life-stress. It is delivered by trained local coaches and aims to help people break the cycle of negative or unhelpful thoughts and to prevent the deterioration of symptoms.

NewAccess is of particular benefit to people living in rural and regional areas where mental health support can be limited and participants do not require a referral from a doctor or health professional.

The free program is delivered by Wellways in Mansfield, Alpine, Wangaratta, Indigo, Towong and Wodonga local government areas. To learn more go to: www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System acknowledged that local mental health services are critically important in regional and rural Victoria, where there are higher rates of psychological distress and suicide.

In response to the Royal Commission recommendations, work has already started on a new mental health system that has communities at its centre, ensuring people can access treatment, care, and support much earlier, and much closer to their homes.

The Labor Government committed a record \$3.8 billion to mental health services and support in the *2021-22 Victorian State Budget*.

If you or someone you know is in crisis or needs support call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health, Steve Dimopoulos

"We haven't forgotten how tough it's been for bushfire-affected communities and mental health support, especially for those in the regional areas like Beechworth, remains a top priority."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria, Jaclyn Symes

"There is a lot of attention on communities in the midst of the emergency – we are making sure that help and support continues in the years after when we know trauma can continue to be experienced."

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Danny Pearson

The devastating impacts of bushfire often extend well beyond the physical repercussions. We'll make sure communities continue to receive the assistance they need on their recovery journey."

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