

Tuesday, 5 May, 2009

\$150.6 MILLION BOOST TO MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

As many as 280 new mental health workers are the centrepiece of the Brumby Labor Government's **\$150.6 million** reform to mental health services in Victoria.

The Minister for Mental Health, Lisa Neville, said the Brumby Labor Government's unprecedented mental health reform and record funding were crucial to building a social safety net for Victorians, particularly in tough global times, and would boost prevention, early intervention, recovery services and social inclusion.

Ms Neville said the 2009 State Budget provided funding to boost mental health outcomes for children, young people and their families, in keeping with the Brumby Labor Government's 10 year mental health reform strategy *Because Mental Health Matters: Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009-2019*, released in March.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action now on mental health to support Victorian families in tough global times and for the future," Ms Neville said.

"We are taking action to ensure Victorians have a world-class mental health system, because we want Victorian families to get the treatment and care they deserve.

"The Brumby Labor Government's investment enables mental health services to take action on the warning signs of mental illness before people get sick and intervening as early as possible to prevent a lifetime of chronic illness wherever possible."

Ms Neville said the massive funding boost announced in the 2009 State Budget was one of the biggest in Victorian history for mental health and placed a particular focus on children and young Victorians, including:

- **\$21.3 million** for the new *Early in Life* program which will provide diagnosis, treatment and support for children and adolescents including: a \$13.8 million boost to early intervention and outreach services; \$4.5 million for two new *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Schools Early Action* teams to be established in metropolitan and rural regions; and \$3 million for a new *Youth Justice Mental Health* initiative to provide clinical treatment and care coordination support to youth justice clients, including those who are leaving custody and are about to reintegrate in the community. This funding secures 50 jobs; and
- **\$8 million** for two new *Youth Prevention and Recovery Care Services* in Bendigo and Frankston which will build on and refocus youth early psychosis teams to respond to a wider range of conditions across a broader age range. This will secure an additional 20 jobs on an ongoing basis and 48 construction jobs.

Ms Neville said that by assisting children and adolescents, the Brumby Labor Government was helping Victorian families confront mental health challenges and put them on the path to maintaining or achieving a stable family environment.

"These initiatives will also strengthen the capacity of other community organisations such as schools, general practice and youth justice services to identify and support high-risk children and young Victorians with emerging social and emotional problems," Ms Neville said.

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In addition to prevention and early intervention measures, the Brumby Labor Government will invest in treatment and recovery services, including:

- **\$66 million** investment in a 120 bed mental health inpatient redevelopment at Dandenong Hospital, and 30 new residential beds. This development provides an additional 73 beds and fulfills Labor's 2006 election commitment. This will secure an additional 60 jobs on an ongoing basis and nearly 400 construction jobs;
- **\$15.6 million** for up to 50 new intensive packages of flexible, scaled psychosocial rehabilitation support linked to a range of housing options for homeless people with severe mental illness and psychiatric disability. This will secure an additional 25 jobs;
- **\$13.8 million** for a new Mental Health list in the Melbourne Magistrates Court for appropriate consideration of mental health issues in criminal proceedings, identifying the underlying causes of offending for people with a mental illness, reducing the need for expensive custodial sentences and delivering better health outcomes for this group;
- **\$11.2 million** to expand and centralise the 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week specialist mental health triage response at a total of six metropolitan and regional area mental health services over the next two years. This will secure 18 new jobs;
- **\$8.3 million** boost over four years to appoint new care coordinators in selected community mental health clinics to support up to 300 high-needs clients to access the range of health, community and social services they require. This will secure 20 new jobs; and
- **\$6.4 million** to strengthen specialist support to people with high needs by providing new expert mental health forensic positions in 10 selected Area Mental Health Services. Clinicians will act as an expert resource for staff within specialist mental health services and other key services, particularly the justice system, supporting them to better manage the risks and behaviours associated with clients. This will secure an extra 11 positions.

Ms Neville said the Brumby Labor Government's 2009 State Budget built on the Government's strong record of investment in social services, to provide a social safety net for Victorians.

"The actions announced today build on the \$128 million Brumby Labor Government funding boost to mental health in last year's State Budget," Ms Neville said.

The 2009 State Budget also provides funding to build eight new mental health beds at Geelong Hospital and open five mental health beds at Maroondah Hospital.

"On top of this package, a further \$6.6 million will be invested to develop a mental health workforce development and innovation institute and to improve local service planning and coordination," Ms Neville said.

"A further \$15 million over four years will provide intensive integrated clinical and psychosocial rehabilitation support packages to people on the waiting list for a secure extended care unit bed."