

Media Release

Youth mental health support for lower South West ramps up

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Young people in the lower South West will have greater access to much needed youth-friendly mental health support with two new services launching early next year.

Approximately \$500,000 in funding will support a youth psychosis *South West Youth Mental Health*, service and a satellite youth mental health *headspace* service based in Busselton, with the existing centre in Bunbury being the hub.

Federal Member for Forrest, Mrs Nola Marino, said there is a significant need for community-based mental health services for young people in the lower South West, with flexible operating hours a priority.

“The South West has the most rapidly growing population of any country region in Western Australia, with more than 11 per cent of the population in the Busselton Local Government Area between the ages of 15 to 24, a relatively high proportion of young people.

“Being able to provide local services such as these is vital to ensuring our youth can access appropriate support, without the additional barriers of distance and travel.

“The new services are holistic, person-centred and recovery focussed. They will change the lives of many young people and result in a range of positive outcomes for youth and their families who are experiencing emerging or existing mental health issues,” Mrs Marino said.

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) regional manager Di Ritson said the services have been designed so the needs of the young person and their family are met in a co-ordinated way, with medical, social and psychological needs being addressed.

“Prevention and early intervention are critical to helping young people with mental health issues and we are committed to responding to local need and improving access to youth mental health care,” Ms Ritson said.

South West Youth Mental Health is specifically for young people with severe and complex mental health conditions and first episode of psychosis.

headspace centres provide access for young people aged 12 to 25, to health workers – whether it’s a GP, psychologist, social worker, alcohol and drug worker, counsellor, vocational worker or youth worker - and are designed to make it as easy as possible for young people and their families to access the help they need.

The new headspace satellite service in Busselton will operate three days a week, one of which will be after-hours. Young people can be referred to the program by their GP, a mental health professional, or by self-referral.

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About WAHPA: WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au