

13 February 2020

headspace Emerald gets the green light

The Central Highlands community of Emerald will soon be home to a stand-alone headspace centre, as part of a \$64M Liberal Nationals Government package for suicide prevention and mental health initiatives.

The Federal Member for Flynn, Ken O'Dowd, said the headspace centre, which could be in operation as soon as the end of the year, will provide tailored and holistic mental health support to 12-25 year olds.

"There are more pressures on young people today than ever before and the establishment of this headspace is so important in providing needed services in our region," Mr O'Dowd said.

"With fires, floods and drought crippling our rural communities like Emerald, most of us think of this as just adult problems, however, these effect the family unit as whole.

"I want our young people to know they are not alone on their journey, and that headspace is there to deliver quality frontline support and coordinate the right interventions for people who are at risk.

"Early intervention is absolutely critical to helping young people with mental health issues."

More than 3,000 people died by suicide in 2018, with suicide accounting for over one-third of all deaths (38.4%) among those aged 15-24.

Pattie Hudson, CEO of Commonwealth funded commissioning agency Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN, said the government's mental health package would provide a significant boost to vital service delivery in the region.

"The PHN's mental health team has been working hard to establish a satellite headspace in Emerald, and we're thrilled the funding has been made available to expand that to a full size, stand-alone headspace centre," Mrs Hudson said.

"There's been a great deal of support from residents for a full-sized headspace in Emerald and we look forward to collaborating with the community to build a service that suits their needs.

"Having a dedicated centre for the first time means young people, and their families, will be able to access support services in a space to call their own.

"It also means headspace Emerald staff will be able to share their knowledge and skills with the surrounding rural and remote communities, by delivering outreach programs and offsite visits."

Best known for coal mining operations in the surrounding areas, Emerald is a rural town at the heart of the Central Highlands and home to an urban population of more than 14,000 residents.

Jason Trethowan, CEO at headspace said the announcement of the full service headspace Emerald is a step in the right direction to ensure young people in rural and remote communities have access to the support they need.

"We know it's much harder for young people to access mental health services in rural and remote parts of Australia," Mr Trethowan said.

"Expanded headspace services like this one in Emerald will go a long way to ensure young people across the region can get the specific youth friendly-support they need to help them get back on track."

For more details on headspace visit headspace.org.au

***** ENDS *****

MEDIA RELEASE

13 February 2020



**For more information contact: Jasmin Midgley, Senior Media and Communications Officer,
Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN on 5456 8100**

Ken O'Dowd: Peter Hardy on 0410 687 987 peter.hardy@aph.gov.au