

### New regional service for psychosocial support

A new national support service will soon be available for people in regional Queensland who are living with severe mental illness, but ineligible for funding under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Funded by Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN, the National Psychosocial Support measure aims to improve service delivery to people whose ill mental health is affecting their day-to-day life.

PHN Senior Manager Michelle McAllister said people who experience severe mental health conditions could face a reduction in their capacity to sustain employment and housing, the ability to engage fully within their community, and to maintain good physical health.

“Depending on a client’s needs, National Psychosocial Support may help with improving social and emotional skills, family connections, the management of daily living, financial management, vocational skills, physical wellbeing and broader life skills,” Mrs McAllister said.

“The service will also take pressure off acute health services by connecting those living with a mental illness with a more appropriate level of care and support.”

The Australian Government announced the National Psychosocial Support initiative last year to address concerns some people with severe mental health issues may not be eligible for the NDIS, yet still require additional services.

Bridges Health and Community Care Chief Executive Officer Sharon Sarah, who leads one of the five organisations in the region who will deliver the program, said their role was to help build capacity in the lives of people living with mental illness.

“As a mental health specialist provider we have the skills and ability to work with people both short and long term to access the resources they need and to help them with their personal recovery goals,” Ms. Sarah said.

“It’s about helping people to direct their own lives, and to live the best life they can have.”

The National Psychosocial Support is for people aged between 18-65 living with a severe mental illness who are unlikely to be eligible for NDIS entry and not currently a participant of an existing community mental health program such as Partners in Recovery, Day to Day Living and Personal Helpers and Mentors, or one funded by Queensland Health.

The program is designed for those who may not meet the threshold of having a severe mental illness but may be at risk of suicide as a result of suicidal ideation and/or suicidal behaviour and have an associated level of reduced psychosocial functional capacity.

Ms. McAllister said the service would extend support to participants in suicidal crisis or in psychological distress in the Gympie, Maryborough and North Burnett National Suicide Prevention Trial sites.

Referrals can be made directly to the following organisations in each area, or can be made to the Partners in Recovery intake line in the PHN region:

- RFQ (Fraser Coast): 07 3363 2555
- Bridges (Gladstone, North Burnett, Bundaberg, Discovery Coast): 1300 707 655
- Anglicare (Rockhampton, Banana Shire, Central Highlands): 1300 769 814
- Open Minds (Sunshine Coast and Gympie): 1300 673 664
- Partners in Recovery central intake line: 1300 747 724

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