



Tanya Davies
Minister for Mental Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE PEER WORKERS TO HELP MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY

Around 30 new Peer Workers will be recruited across the state to help mental health consumers transition from hospital, back into their communities.

Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies today announced the NSW Government will invest \$2.7 million to fund a much needed expansion of the state's peer workforce in 2017-2018.

"Peer Workers are experienced, qualified mental health staff who themselves have personal experience with recovery from mental health issues," Mrs Davies said.

"They are experts who understand and can reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, provide hope to people, and demonstrate recovery is possible."

Mrs Davies said the NSW Government investment will reach each and every Local Health District and speciality network, and see a greater follow-up and support for mental health consumers during and after a hospital visit.

Benefits to mental health consumers include;

- a flexible, tailored support package for consumers for up to 6 weeks following an acute mental health admission
- direct face-to-face follow up for people discharged from an acute mental health inpatient setting within seven days
- a link between acute mental health services and the community, including referrals to community managed support services
- a comprehensive, step-up and step-down model of care incorporating Peer Workers from existing adult community mental health services.

As a result of this funding the public peer workforce in NSW will double, from 56 in June 2016, to around 120 in 2018. Currently there are 130 individuals with lived experience who fill 90 full time positions.

"We are in the midst of a 10-year whole-of-government reform of mental health care in NSW and Peer Workers must play a key role in this journey," Mrs Davies said.

If you or someone you know needs crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. For mental health services please contact the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

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