

MEDIA RELEASE

AUGUST 1, 2018

Free mental health coaching for Darling Downs and West Moreton

A free mental health program developed by *beyondblue* is available now for Darling Downs and West Moreton residents.

The program – NewAccess – will be formally launched in Toowoomba on August 6 and is also available to people living in Ipswich and surrounding rural communities of the Lockyer Valley, Boonah, Esk, South Burnett, Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Western Downs.

The program is open to anyone aged 18 and over who is struggling to cope with everyday challenges including work and personal life pressures, grief, anxiety, isolation and stress. No GP referral is needed.

Between 2013-14, more than 4500 people in the region were admitted to hospital for mental health related issues and more than 1000 people were hospitalised after intentionally self-harming.

NewAccess was designed to provide early mental health support for people; to give them skills to identify and manage issues causing distress so they don't hit psychological crises down the track.

It's a mental health coaching program that pairs people with a trained coach who will work with them over six private sessions in person, by phone or video conference – whichever option is more suitable.

NewAccess coaches are trained in Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and develop tailored recovery plans for each person, empowering people to take control of their mental health.

The structure of this Australian-first program removes the most common barriers preventing people from accessing mental health support – cost, stigma and access to local services.

NewAccess is funded by the Commonwealth Government via the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN and delivered by two local health services providers - Lives Lived Well and Mental Illness Fellowship Queensland (MIFQ).

***beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman** said mental health support wasn't always easy to access, especially for people living in rural areas and on low incomes.

"It takes immense courage for people to put their hand up and ask for support, so we need to make that next step easier for them and ensure they get the support they need," Ms Harman said.

"NewAccess is free and easy to use, so it appeals to people who may otherwise be reluctant to seek support, such as men, older people and people in remote areas."

Lives Lived Well CEO Mitchell Giles said his team was looking forward to working in conjunction with MIFQ to deliver the *beyondblue* program across the region and was grateful to the Darling Downs West Moreton PHN for making this possible through its funding support.

"Lives Lived Well is pleased to be able to offer mental health support as well as our other support services," Mr Giles said.

“Given our long-standing presence in the region, we believe we are ready and well placed to offer it.”

MIFQ CEO Jennifer Pouwer said the organisation had delivered NewAccess to other regions of Queensland over the past twelve months and could see the positive impacts it has on people’s lives.

“MIFQ has a Population Health approach to mental health and wellbeing in the community and the NewAccess program is pivotal to early intervention and education for people experiencing anxiety and depression,” Ms Pouwer said.

“We are privileged to once again work with *beyondblue* and welcome the partnership with Lives Lived Well and Darling Downs West Moreton PHN to deliver NewAccess.”

Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN Chief Executive Officer Merrilyn Strohfeldt said NewAccess aimed to help people living in the region with low levels of anxiety and/or depression tackle day-to-day pressures.

“The program forms part of an expanded range of mental health services the PHN is commissioning across the Darling Downs and West Moreton region with a focus on providing services which cater to an individual’s needs, from low intensity services like NewAccess, right through to services that support individuals with more complex care needs,” Ms Strohfeldt said.

To register or to find out more about NewAccess, phone 1300 971 309 or visit beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess

NewAccess is also available in Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Western Queensland and the Gold Coast.

Ends

NewAccess launch details

- Monday, August 6 at 10.30am
- Empire Theatre, Supper Room, 54-56 Neil St, Toowoomba
- **Media is welcome to attend**

NewAccess coach and CEOs available for media interviews.

Media contact: Cheryl Balfour – (03) 9818 9253 / cheryl.balfour@beyondblue.org.au

Contact: *beyondblue* media
Cheryl Balfour – (03) 9818 9253
cheryl.balfour@beyondblue.org.au

beyondblue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
beyondblue Support Service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au