



Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Liberal Senator for Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

10 December 2018

Landmark Medicare support for Tasmanians living with an eating disorder

The Liberal National Government will help people in West and North West Tasmania living with an eating disorder to access life-saving treatment with a \$115 million landmark package.

Liberal Senator for Tasmania Richard Colbeck welcomed the announcement and said for the first time, those Australians with severe eating disorders will now be able to access a comprehensive treatment plan under Medicare.

“Patients in West and North West Tasmania will be able to access up to 40 Medicare funded psychological and an up 20 dietetic sessions each year from November 1 next year,” Senator Colbeck said.

“Eating disorders have one of the highest mortality rates of any psychiatric illness, with anorexia by far the deadliest mental health condition in Australia. There are around 1 million Australians living with an eating disorder.

“The Liberal National Government is committed to delivering more Medicare services to more Tasmanians who need them and we have been able to pay for it by building a strong economy.”

Minister for Health Greg Hunt said the \$110.7 million investment into the first dedicated Medicare item for eating disorders will benefit around 30,000 people each year living with these debilitating disorders, helping them to get better and stay out of hospital.

“This will undoubtedly save many lives as eating disorders can be debilitating for both men and women of any age and this illness is one of the many nightmares parents have for their children,” Minister Hunt said.

“It is only right that we recognise these debilitating conditions within our Medicare system.”

“We have worked closely with medical experts and key stakeholder for many months to achieve this outcome and we thank the independent Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce for their work, following our request for a review last year.”

“Our Government will also provide \$4 million to the InsideOut Institute for Eating Disorders.”

“This funding will support new research into better treatment and care for people living with an eating disorder condition.”

Our Government is prioritising better mental health for all Australians with \$4.7 billion expected to be spent on mental health this financial year.

This is also why we are so committed to keeping our economy strong. Because without a strong economy and getting our budget back into balance, we can't make these important decisions. This is why a strong economy matters.

The Liberal National Government's strong economic management ensures the continued to investment of record amounts of funding into vital health initiatives including mental health, life-saving medicines, Medicare and public hospitals.

ENDS

Media contact: Felix Ellis 0457 517 734

Authorised by Senator Richard Colbeck, 5-7 Best St, Devonport TAS 7310