



Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Liberal Senator for Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

14 March 2019

New support services for Tasmanians with severe mental illness

Tasmanians living with severe mental illness who sometimes need support to meet the demands of daily life will soon have access to a new, statewide service.

Senator for Tasmania, the Hon. Richard Colbeck announced today that community care provider Bapcare has won a tender to deliver psychosocial support services across Tasmania to help people of all ages boost their capacity to function in day-to-day life.

The Australian Government has committed \$1.7 million to June 2021 to establish and fund these new non-clinical social support services for people who aren't eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and who don't already access other similar services.

"Psychosocial support services are programs and activities designed to help people improve their ability to participate fully in life when their mental illness temporarily impacts on their day-to-day activities," Senator Colbeck said.

"The support can take many forms, such as helping people get better at managing money, developing work goals, maintaining relationships, and more.

"By delivering a strong economy our Government can secure the future of mental health services for people across Tasmania.

"Bapcare has a strong track record supporting Tasmanians in this area and will have these services on the ground as soon as possible so people can start benefitting from them."

Bapcare has been commissioned by Primary Health Tasmania (Tasmania PHN) under the Australian Government's Primary Health Networks Program following an open tender process. The new services are expected to be available from April.

"Primary Health Tasmania developed the new services following consultation with more than 100 stakeholders including consumers, carers, GPs, and social service and mental health providers," Senator Colbeck said.

"This consultation helped build a better understanding of needs and priorities so the new services could be designed to provide maximum benefit."

Media Contact: Felix Ellis 0457 517 734

Baptcare spokesperson Debra Fast said the services will be delivered in the form of individual and group-based activities across Tasmania, with some transport support available and each targeted support package lasting for up to six months.

“We are proud to have been awarded this opportunity to deliver psychosocial support services within Tasmania. The additional funding means that Tasmanians living with severe mental illness can get support to navigate through the daily demands they sometimes struggle with,” Ms Fast said.

ENDS

For more information, contact:

Felix Ellis (Senator Colbeck): 0457 517 734, felix.ellis@aph.gvo.au

Debra Fast (**Baptcare**): 0447 666 737, dfast@baptcare.org.au

Jenny Denholm (**Primary Health Tasmania**): 0418 773 233, idenholm@primaryhealthtas.com.au

Severe mental illness and psychosocial support

- Approximately 3% of the Tasmanian population will experience a severe mental illness.
- People living with a severe mental health illness experience many symptoms that may make it difficult for them to meet the demands of daily life.
- Psychosocial support can take many forms. It may mean supporting people with:
 - developing social skills and friendships
 - building family relationships
 - managing money
 - finding and looking after a home
 - developing work goals
 - improving educational skills
 - staying physically well, including with exercise
 - support with drug, alcohol and smoking issues
 - building broader life skills including confidence and resilience.