



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Ballarat Electorate: Headspace

SPEECH

Monday, 19 March 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Page 3370
Questioner
Speaker King, Catherine, MP

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Ms KING (Ballarat—Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport and Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing) (10:44): I rise to update the House on the important progress being made to establish a headspace facility in my electorate of Ballarat. The Gillard government is delivering the largest ever mental health package to Australia. Our mental health package seeks to invest over \$2.2 billion over five years, and that is having a significant impact already across the country but certainly in regional areas such as my own. Mental health is a priority for this government and it is certainly a priority for me.

I want to update the House on the progress being achieved on the headspace facility. Last October, I announced that a new headspace centre will be delivered to Ballarat. This followed discussions I convened earlier last year among key relevant community organisations to establish a regional headspace service. It was obvious from the start that there was strong support for this service; The hard work of the Ballarat community is now seeing this project continue to be pushed strongly along.

The latest development is that the Ballarat headspace consortium has appointed David Beaver as the first independent chairperson. I have known David for quite some time. He is currently the CEO of Centacare in Ballarat. He has a strong understanding of the mental healthcare needs of youth across our region, and I know he will make a fantastic contribution in his new role as independent chair. In that role, he will work with the consortium to focus on the needs of the region in the establishment of the Ballarat headspace facility.

In addition to David's appointment last Friday, the Ballarat and District Division of General Practice, which is the lead agency in the headspace consortium, submitted its business plan to headspace. It is pleasing to report that the plan has already identified a possible site for the centre—a strong indication of the momentum being developed around this important initiative. If the business plan is approved, the appointment of a centre management should be completed before the middle of this year and the facility will be opened by the start of 2013. I would like to recognise the hard work of Andrew McPherson, who is the CEO of the lead agency, and I know a lot of discussions have been going on behind the scenes to get this up and running.

Mental health is the single biggest issue facing young Australians and the project is welcomed by the Ballarat community. It will make a significant improvement to the mental health of young people in our region. It is difficult for young people across the community to know where to go when they need help or to have the courage and strength to find somebody to talk to. The Ballarat headspace centre will go a long way to reducing these barriers and I congratulate all for the efficient way that they have progressed in its development.

It is another excellent example of the government's commitment and action in dealing with the critical issues of mental health, particularly where they affect young people. Whether they live in city areas or regional centres such as Ballarat, we want people who have mental health issues to see it in exactly the same way as when you go to the doctor when you are sick. If you have issues around mental health then we will have for young people in Ballarat by 2013 the headspace facility. It should be a very normal part of any of the care of the health and wellbeing of our young people.