Landmark day for young people in the Territory

1 February 2016

The Northern Territory Government today launched the Mental Health Youth Inpatient Program at Royal Darwin Hospital, the first specialist child and adolescent mental health facility of its kind in the Northern Territory.

The space will address the growing need and provide much needed specialist care to young Territorians aged 12-18 who require acute mental health treatment.

The Country Liberals Government committed an additional $3 million this financial year to enhance mental health services across the Territory. Of this, $900,000 was directed toward funding the Mental Health Youth Inpatient Program.

“This service development in the Top End highlights the demand and commitment to improving youth services for young Territorians and their families,” Minister for Health John Elferink said.

“The Mental Health Youth Inpatient Program offers a therapeutic program in a homely, caring and supportive environment and provides 24 hour care for young people with complex care and assessment needs.

“The program delivers individualised therapeutic activities that enable staff members to work with young people, their families and carers, to deliver positive outcomes through evidence based practices firmly centred on the strengths and needs of each young person.”

From today five specialist beds based on the Royal Darwin Hospital campus will commence operations, with day programs to start in the coming months.

The unit will be staffed by a specialist child and adolescent medical team, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, youth worker, teachers and nursing staff.

“The expertise of staff will allow for therapeutic programs to be targeted to individual inpatient and day patient needs, optimising early intervention, detection and treatment for mental illness to provide support and recovery capacity for young people and their families,” General Manager of Top End Mental Health Emma Reid said.

“Much work, research and consultation has gone into the development of this program.
“Targeted activities address identified needs whilst being respectful of a young person’s family, culture, gender and sexual identity.

“Our team will work closely with each individual to build on strengths and develop new skills to create a healthy recovery plan.”

Professor Patrick McGorry, Executive Director of Orygen Youth Health, was present for the official launch of the Mental Health Youth Inpatient Program. Prof McGorry was awarded Australian of the Year in 2010 for his commitment to the prevention and treatment of mental illness; he is also a founding member of headspace.

Prof McGorry said that today was a “landmark day for the Territory, young people will now have their own purpose-built space and will be looked after by specialist staff.”

Through support of the Northern Territory Government Prof, McGorry will facilitate a week of training through ORYGEN National Centre of Excellence for all staff at the unit.

Referrals to the unit can be made via the Mental Health Access line 24/7 on 1800 682 288.

Media Contact: Dimitra Grehl 0439 640 895