



Gladys Berejiklian
Premier of NSW

Sarah Mitchell
Minister for Education

John Barilaro
Deputy Premier

Bronnie Taylor
Minister for Mental Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS

A fly-in fly-out psychology and telepsychology service of sixteen permanent senior psychologists will be introduced to support students in regional and remote parts of NSW with mental health.

This is part of the NSW Government's \$88.4 million mental health spend that also includes a commitment to provide every public high school with one full-time counsellor or psychologist and one student support officer.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the NSW Government had run a successful trial of fly-in fly-out psychologists and the service will be permanent from 2021.

"Students across NSW have shown incredible courage and resilience having been impacted by COVID-19, bushfires and drought," Ms Berejiklian said.

"It is incredibly important students have access to mental health support in a timely manner. This will expand the pool of psychologists in locations where there is a limited supply of casual or temporary school counselling staff."

Deputy Premier John Barilaro said this will enable psychologists to provide counselling to ensure students are getting the support they need to deal with anxiety, stress and other difficult issues.

"Mental health is one of the major issues affecting regional communities and this is particularly true for our young people," Mr Barilaro said.

"Drought, bushfires and now COVID have caused a lot of stress for students this year so this is a very timely announcement. Providing them with access to professional support during this time is crucial."

Education Minister Sarah Mitchell said there were currently 1 108 full time equivalent school counselling positions in NSW.

"It is incredibly important that we continue to support our schools when it comes to the mental health and wellbeing of our students in NSW," Ms Mitchell said.

"As a regional parent I am proud of today's announcement because it means students in regional and rural NSW, including primary and central schools, will have ongoing access to a permanent team of specialist psychologists."

Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor said the new service would ensure students will have greater access to help and support.

“This means students in remote communities will now be able to get tailored face-to-face specialist support to complement the existing local, virtual and community-based services.”

The Royal Far West has provided this service to schools like Canowindra Public School, Eugowra Public School, Goolongong Public School, Grenfell Public School, Koorawatha Public School, Naradhan Public School, Rankins Springs School, Weethalle Public School, West Wyalong High School, West Wyalong Public School and Wyalong Public School.

Services undertaken by the psychologists include assessments for learning and or emotional difficulties, therapeutic interventions, consultations with school staff, local counselling for staff and parents and carers, as well as delivery of whole staff professional learning.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing emotional distress and needs support please call Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800 and Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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