



**Bronnie Taylor**  
Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NEW PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS**

In a NSW first, people who no longer require acute mental health services but have no home to return to can access temporary accommodation and intervention-based support thanks to the 'Stepping Stones' program at Macquarie Hospital.

Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor met with some of the program's first residents to benefit from the initiative which aims to support participants' wellbeing and to help them transition to community living.

"Stepping Stones is all about providing a safe place where vulnerable people are well supported and empowered to play a role in their own recovery," Mrs Taylor said.

"This program will transform lives and give members of the community hope for their future after they have gone through a really tough time.

"Helping people at risk of homelessness stay on their journey of recovery is another way the NSW Government is building a safer, stronger NSW."

The program provides an intensive rehabilitation program tailored to the individual's needs, with a strong focus on life skills, social integration and connecting with existing government programs, such as state housing programs and NDIS.

Member for Ryde Victor Dominello said Stepping Stones would benefit the whole community.

"This groundbreaking program will help its residents develop their life skills and support network so they are best placed to thrive in their local community in the future," said Mr Dominello.

Northern Sydney Local Health District's (NSLHD) Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Director Andrea Taylor said the program will prioritise people from the area but will accept referrals from other regions.

"We welcome referrals from all of NSLHD's mental health services. Referrals from other local health districts will also be considered if there is capacity," she said.

Participants of 'Stepping Stones' live in two four-bed cottages. While they are

responsible for their own cooking and cleaning, trained mental health staff are available to support them work towards their mental health, skills and accommodation goals. They are also supported by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, medical professionals and social workers.

'Stepping Stones' received \$900,000 funding as part of the NSW Government's \$80 million investment to strengthen mental health support in response to COVID-19.

**MEDIA: Richard Shute | 0409 394 232**