

Media Release



January 11, 2019

For immediate release

New service available for young people with complex mental health needs

Samaritans is pleased to announce the commencement of the Rural Young Minds Program, a youth complex mental health service commissioned by The Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network.

The new service is coordinated by the experienced management of headspace Maitland which is auspiced by Samaritans and aims to meet the needs of young people with, or at risk of, severe mental illness.

“The commencement of Rural Young Minds in the Hunter New England areas has been desperately needed for a long time. We have established a skilled team who are excited to be working across the Upper Hunter and Liverpool Plains areas,” Clinical and Service Integration Manager for headspace Maitland, Felicity Scott, said.

In the Hunter New England area, Samaritans will be delivering youth complex mental health support for the Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter and Liverpool Plains LGAs and services have now commenced.

“Currently people with mild to moderate mental health conditions are well covered through the primary care system and people who are in immediate and severe crisis are covered by acute services such as CAMHS and Adult Mental Health sectors, but to date there has been inadequate specialist, multidisciplinary care in the middle and this service will work to meet this need.

“Improving access to quality care for young people (12-25yrs) with, or at risk of developing severe mental illness is a key priority of Samaritans and the Primary Health Network. We want young people to get the right care at the right time, in the right place and we believe we have the skills and support networks to deliver,” Ms Scott said.

This new approach is referred to as a stepped care model and a young person's journey will be determined by the severity of their mental illness.

“Stepped care is an evidence-based, staged system comprising a hierarchy of interventions, from the least to the most intensive, matched to the individual’s needs. In a stepped care approach, a person presenting to the mental health system is matched to the intervention level that most suits their current need.

A stepped care approach promotes person-centred care which targets the needs of the individual. Rather than offering a one size fits all approach to care, individuals will be more likely to receive a service which more optimally matches their needs.

“We see many representations each month that would be better serviced by this specialist program and we expect it to deliver fantastic outcomes for young people with complex mental health concerns across the region,” Ms Scott said.

Young people can access the service by calling 1800 270 738.

-ENDS-

Media Contact: Media are invited to contact Samaritans Communication Team on 4960 7100 or 0438 475 772 to organise a photo or interview opportunity.