



**Gladys Berejiklian**

Premier

**Dominic Perrottet**

Treasurer

**Bronnie Taylor**

Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 24 April 2020

*\*Vision to download below\**

### **\$73 MILLION TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELLNESS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

More than 180 mental health workers will be deployed across the state as part of a \$73 million package to boost mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor today announced the NSW Government funding boost, which will help support the mental health and wellbeing of people across the state.

Ms Berejiklian said the additional mental health staff and new digital resources would ensure anyone who requires support is able to access it when they need it.

“We know how challenging the past few months have been. Many people have lost their jobs and all of us have had to change the way we live,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“During this time it is vital we deliver robust mental health services that fit the evolving needs of the community – this means employing more frontline workers and greater investment in remote technology.”

The NSW Government’s mental health support package includes:

- Over 180 additional specialist, community-based mental health clinicians and peer support workers;
- Expanding the virtual mental health program to all local health districts;
- Free access to Tresillian’s digital SleepWellBaby program;
- Capacity for 60,000 extra calls to the 1800 NSW Mental Health Line;
- Creation of pop-up mental health Safe Space sites, reducing pressure on emergency departments.

Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor said the NSW Government measures complement the Federal Government’s mental health plan and enhance the capacity to support people in their homes rather than in hospitals and emergency departments.

“The NSW Mental Health Line is staffed by specialist mental health clinicians who can provide immediate care and expert advice and make referrals to appropriate services, with this additional funding it will now be able to take an extra 60,000 calls,” Mrs Taylor said.

“In this time of extraordinary stress on the health system, we are preparing pop-up mental health Safe Space sites to divert people with mental health issues from emergency departments.”

Mr Perrottet said boosting technology for vulnerable people would have an immediate positive impact.

“Virtual services will connect specialist mental health clinicians with remote and at-risk populations where face-to-face service options are limited,” Mr Perrottet said.

"This funding will make a real difference to so many people who will be confronting an extremely difficult period in their lives at what is an extraordinarily challenging period."

The NSW Government announced last month \$6 million would be provided to Lifeline to ensure it is equipped to respond to the increased needs of the community throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

The NSW Government previously announced \$800 million for NSW Health to support the health system including significantly increasing capacity in NSW public hospitals, particularly within ICUs.

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\* Vision of NSW Mental Healthline workers is available here:

<https://vimeo.com/410447947/975c3b7a67>