

14 April 2023

Uniting to establish headspace Hawkesbury

Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, together with the Federal Member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman, are pleased to announce that Uniting NSW.ACT has been successful in their tender to establish and operate the new headspace in the Hawkesbury.

The full-service centre, due to open in December 2023, will provide young people aged 12-25, their family and friends support for their mental, physical and sexual health, alcohol and/or other drug concerns, as well as assistance with vocational and educational services.

Uniting has more than 40 years' experience in developing and implementing mental health and community service programs, and currently operate three other headspace services in Katoomba, Mount Druitt and Penrith.

Wentworth Healthcare is the regional funding body responsible for delivering headspace in the Hawkesbury and is excited to be partnering with Uniting, who were selected after a rigorous open tender process. The tender assessment panel included local health professionals, a Hawkesbury youth, industry experts, and representatives from the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and headspace National.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said, "Recent multiple natural disasters on top of the pandemic, have had a profound impact on young people and their families in the Hawkesbury. It was important that we find the most suitable provider to deliver this much needed service, and that they understood the unique challenges that young people in the Hawkesbury face."

"In advocating for this headspace centre over the last few years, we have undertaken extensive consultation with the community. Young people have clearly told us that what they want is the opportunity to help shape this service, to ensure it provides an inclusive, supportive environment where young people can share their concerns and learn coping strategies to navigate life's challenges," she said.

"We believe that with Uniting's experience operating headspace Katoomba and Penrith in our region, and recent outreach services in the Hawkesbury, that they are well placed to deliver this new headspace centre," she continued.

Head of Uniting's Mental Health Services, Chantal Nagib, said this is welcome news for the Hawkesbury and knows her team is looking forward to working with Wentworth Healthcare to provide the mental health support this community needs.

"Through our involvement with the Hawkesbury Outreach service, we know the need for a permanent headspace site in the Hawkesbury is a must and to see it being made a priority means we can get on with the job of providing face-to-face support for the people who need it most. We hope that this service will be a safe place for all young people to seek the help and care they need for their mental health concerns," Mrs Nagib said.



Acting headspace CEO, Julia Smith, said, “With two in five young people experiencing mental ill-health, it has never been more important for headspace to provide culturally safe, youth-friendly mental health support – when and where young people need it most.”

“While it’s been a particularly tough time for young people in the Hawkesbury as of late – it’s great that headspace, a service trusted by young people, will be able to provide this support to the local community. Young people are resilient, and with support, can and do weather tough times to get back on track,” she said.

If community members, particularly young people, want to participate in any consultations or be kept up-to-date about headspace Hawkesbury, register your interest through HealthHub, at <https://healthhub.nbmphn.com.au/headspace-hawkesbury->

If you or a young person you know needs mental health support, the headspace Outreach Service holds sessions every second Thursday at **North Richmond Community Centre from 10:00am - 5:00pm**. Walk-ins are accepted but bookings are preferred. Call headspace Penrith on **1800 477 626** for more information or to make an appointment. No referral is needed and services are free.

Support is also available through the Head to Health Pop Up service in the Hawkesbury via appointment, Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 5:00pm. Bookings can be made by calling **1800 595 212**. No referral is needed, and this service is also free.

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