



# **Kevin Humphries MP**

## **Minister for Mental Health**

## **Minister for Healthy Lifestyles**

## **Minister for Western NSW**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

#### **HELPING MORE PEOPLE IN THE ILLAWARRA OVERCOME DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION**

Illawarra residents caught in the cycle of drug and alcohol addiction will from today have increased access to treatment and rehabilitation services.

The Minister for Mental Health and Healthy Lifestyles, Kevin Humphries, today visited Wollongong with the Member for Kiama, Gareth Ward, to announce that the NSW Government will provide the Watershed Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Centre with an additional \$472,000 over three years to expand its programs that help drug and alcohol dependent people rid themselves of their addiction.

“There are few problems that are crueller and more debilitating than drug addiction, so I am pleased to announce the NSW Government is providing vital funding to Watershed to expand its delivery of drug and alcohol treatment services throughout the Illawarra,” Mr Humphries said.

“This additional funding is part of a \$10 million package for new drug and alcohol rehabilitation services and programs that reflects the NSW Government’s commitment to helping people with drug and alcohol problems overcome their addictions, get back on their feet and lead meaningful lives in their communities.

“The NSW Government is committed to keeping people out of our acute hospital wards, out of our prisons and back in the community making a valuable contribution, and this funding will go a long way to helping Watershed achieve these aims.”

The new service will be primarily for people with co-morbid drug and alcohol and mental health issues, people in contact with the criminal justice system, those with young children and others with high support needs.

Watershed CEO Will Temple said the new program aimed to ensure that people in need of support didn’t miss out simply because work and family commitments prevent them from being in a residential program.

“It is not always practical or possible for clients to undertake a 24/7 treatment program. The demands of life mean they are often trying to hold down a job or look after small children all while attempting to get a handle on their substance misuse issues,” Mr Temple said.

“Clients will be offered a full range of support services including counselling, group therapy and educational sessions. They will also have access to assistance and advocacy to help them get back, and stay, on their feet such as legal aid and connection to other agencies such as NSW Health, Family and Community Services and Corrective Services.

“It is now well recognised that clients are more likely to seek out, and continue, treatment if it can fit seamlessly into their day to day responsibilities. The easier we can make it, the more likely the chance of a successful outcome.”

Member for Kiama Gareth Ward said a significant focus of the new service will be to help re-integrate people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction back into the community.

“I congratulate Watershed on winning this tender and I am confident that the organisation will continue to deliver high quality services to the people of the Illawarra and South Coast that go towards breaking the destructive cycle of substance addiction,” Mr Ward said.