

13 December 2021

Penrith Head to Health Centre Now Open

An innovative new adult mental health service has opened in Penrith that promises to change the way people access mental health services in the region.

Located at 111 Henry Street and open **7 days a week, 365 days a year**, including public holidays, the Penrith Head to Health Centre provides walk-in support, without the need of a prior appointment, to individuals experiencing distress or crisis. The Centre also supports those wanting to find other mental health support for themselves, or someone they care about.

The Federal Government has invested \$14 million into the Penrith Head to Health Centre as part of its 2019-20 Prioritising Mental Health budget measure. The Centre is one of eight being trialled nationally over next five years, with one located in each state and territory. Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, is delivering the concept and has commissioned Neami National to operate the Centre.

The Penrith Centre is the first Head to Health Centre to open in the country and will help to provide individuals with a soft entry into mental health and wellbeing support. This will be particularly helpful for people who may not have accessed mental health service before, and who may feel overwhelmed by the thought of trying to seek formal help. People who are unable to visit the Centre in person can also access support through the Centre via telehealth.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay said, “We are so excited to see this innovative service officially open in our community. This Centre couldn’t have come at a better time, as we see the pressures of the ongoing pandemic and compounding trauma, such as drought, floods and bushfires take its toll on many of our residents.”

“This service is a game changer for integrating the mental health space in our area and the way we support those experiencing mental health concerns, as it not only provides direct support but helps to connect people to other mental health services across the region,” she said.

“When designing the service model, it was important that the needs of our community were taken into consideration. Together with Neami National, we worked closely with local healthcare providers, people with lived experience, their carers and families to ensure that this Centre was tailored to suit our local region. Now that the Centre is open, it is exciting to see the visions from all those involved come to fruition,” said Ms Reay.

“At the heart of the Centre’s design is the intention to create a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment for individuals experiencing emotional or psychological distress and the loved ones and carers who support them,” she said.

Neami National CEO, Tom Dalton said “The Penrith Head to Health is the combination of working with the PHN and other partners and being responsive and driven by the community co-design process. The insights from the participants in the co-design process will help create a trusted service that meets the evolving needs of the community.”



“I encourage the community to visit the Centre to see the support they can offer you, either now or in the future. Many of the staff employed at the Centre have a lived experience of mental health issues themselves and are passionate about helping people find the right care for their individual needs.”

Penrith Head to Health is open from 1:00pm - 9:30pm every day, except Tuesdays when it is open from 1:00pm - 5:00pm. The Centre will be open over the upcoming Christmas and New Year holidays, for anyone experiencing emotional distress and crisis.

To contact the Centre via phone, or for people in our region unable to visit the Centre in person, call the **Head to Health phone line** on **1800 595 212** from Monday to Friday 8:30-5:00pm (except public holidays).

When people call the [Head to Health phone line](#), they speak to a trained mental health professional from the Nepean Blue Mountains region, who will take the time to listen and understand their needs and help them find the right mental health support. This may include referring them to existing local services or referring them to see a clinician through the Penrith Head to Health Centre or the Head to Health Pop Up hub, now located in the Hawkesbury. Any referral made is done in a way that means people don't have to repeat their story multiple times.

To find out more about the Penrith Head to Health centre visit www.nbmphn.com.au/PenrithHeadtoHealth

To find out more about the Head to Health Pop Up service located in the Hawkesbury visit www.nbmphn.com.au/HtoHPopUp

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