



David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Media Statement

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Strengthening mental health services and job security in Maranoa

Better support for mental health services in the bush is one of Maranoa MP David Littleproud's top priorities and said the Coalition Federal Government is set to provide a record \$1.45 billion across the nation to ensure security for both jobs and services.

"This funding will be channelled through the Primary Health Networks (PHN) – the Federal Government's healthcare local funding facilitator – to better target the needs and services of local communities," Mr Littleproud said.

Mr Littleproud – who represents almost half of Queensland, including some of our state's more remote communities – said PHNs commission health services, including mental health.

"It's estimated one in five people experience a common mental disorder each year. Nearly half of the Australian population will experience mental illness at some point in their lives, but less than half will access treatment," he said.

"We're going through a tough time as drought also impacts on mental health and this is an important topic which needs to be discussed because – when it's spoken about – conversation pours light on an issue which some associate with darkness. Through conversation comes healing and hopefully provides time for help and assistance.

"This government is serious about mental health services because I advocated for those who live in rural and remote communities to have access to counselling services through Medicare-funded telehealth appointments, making it easier to access support in the bush.

"Now we can access online videoconferencing with consultants such as psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists can now be claimed through Medicare."

The Federal Government will also change the way PHNs are funded to ensure staff and mental health professionals delivering these critical services won't face uncertainty caused by short-term contracts.

"This will allow longer-term planning, provide job certainty for thousands of people employed in the sector, and deliver a stronger mental health system," Mr Littleproud said.

"This will particularly benefit those living in rural and remote areas, where staffing shortages due to employment uncertainty have historically reduced access to mental health services."

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