



# The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

## Premier of NSW

### Minister for Western Sydney

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **PREMIER LAUNCHES MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION**

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries today announced the launch of a statewide consultation period to gather community input into mental health reform in NSW.

In a keynote speech to Lifeline at the Four Seasons Hotel in Sydney, the Premier outlined the approach to be taken by the NSW Government as it builds towards the establishment of a Mental Health Commission by mid-2012.

"Our responsibility is to build the framework for the next generation of mental health care and we want to ensure we get it right," Mr O'Farrell said.

"We've already announced the creation of the Mental Health Commission, which delivers on a key election commitment to ensure full co-ordination of mental health services.

"Over the next six weeks, the NSW Government's Mental Health Taskforce will oversee consultation across the State.

"People can choose which way they would prefer to participate:

- six major forums in central Sydney, Western Sydney, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour and Nowra;
- an online survey available at [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au) and
- attending local events held by Members of Parliament.

"The NSW Government is encouraging MPs from all sides of politics to gather ideas and views from across their own local communities.

"The Task Force will advise on how to address three key areas:

1. To better manage the experience of mental health patients and carers;
2. To divert mental health patients away from the prison system; and
3. To ensure a smooth operation of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

"We want to ensure there is quarantined and accountable funding for mental health expenditure and that resources are focused where they are most needed, through the most appropriate models of care," Mr O'Farrell said.

Mr Humphries said the Mental Health Commission will be the leader in policy and reform in mental health in NSW, and the NSW Government expects it to develop into a world-leader in innovation and customer-focussed services.

“The online survey will ensure that people who could not attend a major forum or a local event organised by their State MP will still have their say,” Mr Humphries said.

“The NSW Government will use the results of the survey, and an ongoing review of world’s best practice models, to inform its approach.

“We are strongly committed to establishing a Mental Health Commission by July 2012, and the Mental Health Taskforce is working hard to build an appropriate model that meets the unique needs of NSW.

“The NSW Mental Health Commission will be based on best practice models from around the world, including the New Zealand Mental Health Commission and the Western Australian Mental Health Commission.

“However we must also tailor these successful models to match the unique situation faced by NSW.

“It’s important that we get this right, and the message I’m hearing time and again from families of suicide victims and others suffering mental health problems is that the previous government didn’t listen to those directly impacted by mental health problems.

“It is also important to ensure we seek input from people in the bush who suffer a lack of services, yet who are over-represented in suicide statistics.

“The NSW Government will work to build a mental health system in which the NSW community can have confidence.

“This was an election commitment and the establishment of a Taskforce to establish the Commission is a key milestone within the NSW Government’s 100 Day Action Plan,” Mr Humphries said.

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