



**Mick Gentleman** MLA



MINISTER FOR PLANNING  
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES  
MINISTER FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
MINISTER FOR AGEING

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

**EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY 11 JULY 2014, 10.30AM**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### Taking free mental health support to the workplace

Minister for Community Services, Mick Gentleman, today joined ACT Medicare Local (ACTML) to announce that the free NewAccess mental health service is now available to workers at the Canberra Airport one day a week as part of a broader push to reduce the barriers to accessing mental health services.

Mr Gentleman joined Dr Rashmi Sharma, ACTML Chair and Mr Noel McCann, Director of Planning and Government Relations Canberra Airport to launch the partnership between ACTML and Capital Airport Group.

“With one in three women and one in five men experiencing anxiety at some stage in their life, it’s important that mental health services are easily accessible and it is important that these services are coordinated to ensure they are available close to where people live and work, which is what ACTML is all about,” Mr Gentleman said.

“Free NewAccess services in the airport business precinct will impact positively on workers’ health and wellbeing and will also help to reduce the stigma that can surround mental health,” he said.

Mr Noel McCann, Director of Planning and Government Relations Canberra Airport said Canberra Airport is pleased to be involved in delivering the NewAccess program to their tenants at Canberra Airport.

“We hope that by supporting this early intervention service we are providing easy access for those who may be less likely to seek support. We understand that people live very busy lives and that some are dealing with work pressure or stress at home. Our aim is to provide a welcoming sense of community that supports that all important balance between work, health and lifestyle,” said Mr McCann.

ACTML Chair Dr Rashmi Sharma said ACTML is the first health care organisation in Australia to trial the NewAccess program after its success in the UK. NewAccess aims to support around 2,000 Canberrans over two years and is funded by Movember and *beyondblue*.

“Canberrans with mild to moderate depression or anxiety can access free low-intensity mental health support from trained coaches who will point them in the right direction, set practical goals and help them get back on track. They can be referred by their GP or they can call the program directly on 02 6287 8066,” said Dr Sharma.

Funded by *beyondblue*, trained Access Coaches provide evidence-based, low-intensity psychological strategies and support either face-to-face or over the phone for up to six sessions.

ACTML is the ACT’s chief primary health care organisation supporting health professionals to improve the delivery of local primary health care services.

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