



Bronnie Taylor

Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

David Elliott

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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GROUNDBREAKING FIRST RESPONDER AND MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION BOOSTED BY \$6 MILLION INVESTMENT

First responders attending incidents with people in a mental health emergency are set to benefit from a \$6.1 million investment by the NSW Government to employ 36 specialist mental health clinicians across 10 Police Area Commands and Districts.

Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor and Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott today announced the expansion of the Police Ambulance and Clinical Early Response (PACER) pilot program.

“This ground breaking collaboration embeds mental health experts with first responders to support them to appropriately recognise, assess, and respond to mental health emergencies live at the scene,” Mrs Taylor said.

“The pilot program has had incredible results with significant reductions in emergency department presentations, police and ambulance time on scene.

“This approach has enormous potential to change lives, with the community getting more appropriate care at the time when they need it most.”

Mr Elliott welcomed the support for the police officers who are deeply committed to serving and protecting the people of NSW

“During the pilot program, police time-on-scene was reduced by an average of 45 minutes, not only supporting first responders to appropriately recognise and respond to psychiatric incidents in the community, but also freeing up officers to serve the community in other areas,” Mr Elliott said.

“The presence and availability of a PACER clinician in a police station increases the knowledge and understanding of mental health issues amongst officers

“This initiative is crucial, now more than ever, following the devastating ‘Black Summer’ bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have affected us all.”

NSW Police Force Deputy Commissioner, Malcolm Lanyon APM, said the PACER model has been a success at the trial site in St George Police Area Command.

“During the trial we saw a significant reduction in time taken for police to respond to these matters. It translated to a better outcome for both our officers and the individuals in need of assistance,” Mr Lanyon said.

The PACER program will expand to Campbelltown, Nepean, Northern Beaches, Sutherland Shire, Blacktown, Eastern Beaches, Kuring-gai, Metro Combined consisting of Kings Cross/Surry Hills/City of Sydney, South Sydney and Bankstown Police Area Commands with recruitment underway for the specialist mental health clinicians from July 2020.

This investment is part of the \$73 million suite of mental health measures recently announced by the NSW Government. This includes 216 new mental health staff, additional funding for the NSW Mental Health Line, extra support for Telehealth, funding for extra therapeutic programs to aid recovery in mental health units and a \$6 million investment in Lifeline to expand their invaluable service.

Vision alert - police vision of the PACER program simulation is available at:
<https://spaces.hightail.com/receive/CDXvPCsjKU/b3N1bDFicmIAcG9saWNILm5zdy5nb3YuYXU=>