



**Senator the Hon Brett Mason  
Parliamentary Secretary to the  
Minister for Health and Ageing**

**Mr Paul Neville MP  
Member for Hinkler**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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BM 42/07

### **Helping people affected by drought-related trauma**

The Australian Government is providing \$10.1 million to help people living in drought-affected communities to deal with drought-related psychological trauma.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Brett Mason, launched the initiative in Gladstone, Queensland, today with the Member for Hinkler, Paul Neville.

Senator Mason said total funding of \$7.4 million would be provided to 39 Divisions of General Practice in drought-affected rural and remote areas around Australia to employ community support workers to provide crisis counselling and outreach services for people affected psychologically by the drought.

“It is important that these communities have the capacity to respond to drought-related psychological distress,” Mr Neville said. “Further funding is being provided to train workforce and community leaders to recognise and respond to the early warnings of emotional distress, and raise awareness of mental health issues and services.”

The Government will work closely with *beyondblue* and the Australian General Practice Network to implement this initiative.

To complement this initiative, the Government recently announced that \$20.6 million would be provided to employ 114 additional allied health and/or mental health nursing professionals to strengthen the mental health service network in drought-declared rural and remote areas. This is part of the \$70 million, four-year *Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Communities* initiative.

A list of Divisions of General Practice which are receiving funding is attached. The list is also available at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/dgpp-trauma>

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**Divisions of General Practice to receive funding for  
drought-related psychological trauma**

<p><b>NSW</b></p> <p>New England DGP NSW Outback DGP South East NSW DGP Northern Rivers DGP Barwon DGP Central West NSW DGP Riverina DGP North West Slopes NSW Dubbo Plains DGP Murrumbidgee DGP Hunter Rural DGP Barrier DGP Southern Highlands DGP Shoalhaven DGP</p> <p><b>Queensland</b></p> <p>Capricornia DGP Central QLD Rural DGP Mackay DGP North &amp; West QLD Primary Health Care Southern QLD Rural Sunshine Coast DGP GP Connections Wide Bay DGP</p>	<p><b>South Australia</b></p> <p>Eyre Peninsula DGP Limestone Coast DGP Mid North DGP Flinders &amp; Far North DGP Murray Mallee General Practice Network Riverland DGP</p> <p><b>Victoria</b></p> <p>Border DGP Ballarat DGP Bendigo DGP Central Highlands DGP West Vic DGP North East Victoria DGP East Gippsland DGP Goulburn Valley DGP Mallee DGP Murray-Plains DGP Otway DGP</p>
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