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Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Supporting youth mental health - new funding and new chair for headspace

The Rudd Government will provide \$35.6 million funding to headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, to continue its vital work on youth mental health.

This will allow headspace to continue providing support to young people across a range of areas, including their general and mental health, education, employment opportunities, and drugs and alcohol rehabilitation.

The funding will be provided over three years from July 2009 once headspace has repositioned itself as an independent company, better placing it to improve the lives of young people living with mental illness.

I am also pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Wendy McCarthy as the new Chair of headspace.

Ms McCarthy will assist headspace to put in place the new independent company structure. The Government anticipates the transition to this new structure will occur as quickly as possible, so as to ensure certainty for headspace services and staff.

Ms McCarthy has given 40 years of service to the community as a teacher, educator, company director and mentor, including ten years as the Chancellor of the University of Canberra.

Currently she is Vice-Chair of Plan International and a director of Plan Australia; Chair of Circus Oz, McGrath Estate Agents, Sydney Community Foundation, NSW Sustainable Access Priority Taskforce; and a member of the NSW Health Care Advisory Council. She is also patron of the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance.

She succeeds Mr Ryan Stokes who has provided valuable service to headspace as chair of the organisation since its inception in 2006. I greatly appreciate the enormous contribution which Mr Stokes has made in leading headspace through its establishment phase, helping it to establish 30 youth mental health services across Australia.

These services give young people access to general practitioners and allied health professionals with skills and experience in fields such as alcohol and drug, mental health, and youth support services.

headspace also operates a centre of excellence which gathers evidence about mental health best practice. It provides specialist training for health professionals and supports local and national community awareness campaigns.

Congratulations to Wendy. I wish her and all the headspace staff well in continuing to provide important mental health services for young people across Australia.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.