



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

**SENATOR THE HON SCOTT RYAN
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

MEDIA RELEASE

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New online mental health service helps young people affected by cancer

Australia's first ever online mental health service for young people affected by cancer was officially launched today by Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, on behalf of Health Minister Peter Dutton.

Senator Ryan said the CanTeen Online Support Platform connects young people affected by cancer to their peers, as well as to up-to-date information and counselling services.

"Each year, it is estimated that about 23,000 more young people are affected by cancer as a patient or through the diagnosis of a parent or sibling, more than half of whom will experience high levels of psychological distress as a result," Senator Ryan said.

Minister Dutton said the online platform will also provide vital support for those living in regional and rural areas.

"When services are available online, they can reach many people who would otherwise not receive the support they need. This includes people living in remote locations and those who are reluctant to seek face-to-face support," Mr Dutton said.

CanTeen estimates that its new platform will support about 50,000 young people over the next two years alone.

"The CanTeen Online Support Platform connects them to a supportive community. Here, they can share their experiences with other young people going through similar situations, read and participate in forums and blogs, and connect to counsellors and other support services to help them through a challenging time in their lives," Senator Ryan said.

Some studies show that 95 per cent of young Australians are accessing online technologies daily, so quality services such as CanTeen's Online Support Platform will be effective in reaching young people and providing them with support and advice.

The Australian Government provided CanTeen with more than \$1.9 million to develop a telephone and online counselling platform for young Australians affected by cancer.

“This Government is also providing \$5 million to develop a new comprehensive e-mental health platform to make it easier for young people to access mental health support 24 hours a day,” Mr Dutton said.

“This is part of a series of investments in mental health that were announced in the Budget including 10 additional headspace sites.”

An additional \$18 million over four years will also be spent to establish a National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health.

The online platform can be viewed at www.canteen.org.au/nowwhat.

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