



Matt Kean

Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation

Tanya Davies

Minister for Mental Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FIRST WITH MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES

Thousands of workers around the State will have better support at work while overcoming mental health challenges thanks to the NSW Government's *Mentally Healthy Workplaces* strategy.

Minister for Better Regulation Matt Kean is today launching a new workplace intervention program, a new website with free support and resources, and additional funding to help drought-affected farm workers living with mental illness and distress.

"We know about one in six workers will experience significant mental illness in any four week period. Because mental illness can sometimes reoccur, the proportion of the workforce experiencing this in any year may be even higher," Mr Kean said.

"When mental health challenges arise, it can often mean time off work. But returning to work is an important step in recovery because it can help give structure and a sense of purpose."

The new initiatives include:

- A program of Mentally Healthy Workplaces Ambassadors, including Landcom, led by John Brogden, to raise awareness of the importance of workplace mental health;
- Access to free, tailored SafeWork NSW training for at least 3,600 managers around NSW to improve awareness and support of mental illness;
- A website, which has free support and resources for managers and workers about workplace mental health; and
- A funding boost of \$100,000 for the Virtual Psychologist service, which will give an additional 1,100 farmers access to critical psychological counselling support in real time.

"This is the first stage of the \$55 million *Mentally Healthy Workplaces* strategy, which represents the single-biggest investment in workplace mental health in the country's history," Mr Kean said.

"Mental health-related absenteeism is estimated to cost the NSW economy \$1.5 billion annually. This strategy will play a critical role in improving people's lives while maximising the State's productivity."

Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies said the strategy was developed in consultation with people with lived experience of mental illness, as well as academics, advocates, industry and worker representatives.

“We need to work together to tackle the stigma that still exists around mental illness, and these new initiatives will make it easier for people to take the sometimes daunting step of reaching out for support to stay in, or return to, work.”

Visit the new *Mentally Healthy Workplaces* website [here](#). Find out more about the *NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces Strategy 2018-2022* [here](#) or call SafeWork NSW on 13 10 50.

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