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## WentWest Limited

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Four Additional Medicare Mental Health Centres to Open in NSW

On Friday 16 August 2024 at the Adult Mental Health Centre in Parramatta, the locations of four additional Medicare Mental Health Centres for NSW were announced. Medicare Mental Health Centres provide free, walk-in support for people struggling or in mental distress, and ongoing care for more complex mental health needs.

Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, stated, *“The struggles of day-to-day life are placing increasing pressure on people and demand on our services which is why we are pleased to announce an additional four locations in NSW: Blacktown, here in Western Sydney, Campbelltown in South-West Sydney, Broken Hill and Central Darling in Western NSW.”*

In the recent budget, the Albanese Government has invested an additional \$29.9 million to boost the clinical capability of the Medicare Mental Health Centre network to provide access to psychologists and psychiatrists on call. A total of 61 Medicare Mental Health Centres will open across the country, including 22 in New South Wales.

Hon Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Mental Health, commented *“You can walk in the door of a Medicare Mental Health Centre and connect with a peer worker, connect with a social worker and through the additional funding of the Commonwealth Government, escalate that through to a psychologist or psychiatrist if you need it. You don’t need an appointment. It isn’t just 9-5.”*

The addition of a Medicare Mental Health Centre in Blacktown means residents will be able to access the free service, with no referral needed.

Hon Minister Chris Bowen MP, remarked, *“Many of us call Western Sydney home. We are younger, we are more diverse, and with diversity comes opportunity to help people through their multi-faceted journey through our country. Whether you have been here all your life or whether you’ve just arrived here, we all from time to time need a little bit of guidance and assistance through the challenges of life.”*

The Commonwealth Government is providing a total of \$17.1 million to open the four new centres, with the State Government contributing an additional \$1.1 million towards to Blacktown centre.

Andrew Newton, CEO of WentWest, the Western Sydney Primary Health Network commented, *“We’re excited to see further investment into mental health services in Western*

*Sydney. The new Medicare Mental Health Centre in Blacktown will enhance local service integration, offering free face-to-face, phone or online support to those who need it. Blacktown LGA has a population of around 400,000 with approximately 24,000 residents reported to have mental health conditions. We welcome the support of both the Commonwealth and State Governments and their recognition of the needs of the Blacktown community.”*

Exact locations of the services will be determined following community consultation and co-design.

The Western Sydney Primary Health Network is currently working on an expression of interest of tender for the Blacktown Medicare Mental Health Centre which is expected to open mid-2025.