

Media Release



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District

Date: Thursday 28 January 2016

Mental Health Clinics for Williamstown community

Community members impacted by the RAAF Base Williamstown contamination issue now have access to a dedicated mental health service.

Associate Professor Martin Cohen, Director Hunter New England Mental Health Service said the service will be providing weekly half-day clinics starting next Thursday Fern Bay Medical Centre.

“The current situation in Williamstown is understandably, very stressful and it’s important that people have access to support if they need it,” said Dr Cohen.

“I hope that by being available close to home, affected community members will find it that bit easier to seek help if they are interested.”

A dedicated phone line has also been established for the people of Williamstown to easily access mental health clinicians for appointments and support.

“Anybody who would like an appointment, or support can call 0417 494 576 between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday,” said Dr Cohen.

“Outside of these hours, help is available via the Hunter New England Mental Health triage line on 1800 011 511.

The triage line is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Anybody who calls this number will be referred to the most appropriate service for support.

In addition to the clinic, in the coming weeks local General Practitioners will also be offered support.

“Situations like this are stressful for the entire community,” said Dr Cohen.

“Often locally based general practitioners will see the bulk of people affected so ensuring they are supported and have access the things they need to help their community is vital.”

Rural Mental Health Counsellor Sarah Green will continue to offer the monthly promotion and prevention seminars that were successful at the end of last year.

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