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Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW, Small Business and Skills

Tanya Davies

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Women

MEDIA RELEASE

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PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR NEW MUMS AND DADS IN THE BUSH

Expectant and new parents living in rural and remote areas of NSW will have better access to perinatal psychological counselling following the NSW Government's investment of \$270,000 in Gidget Foundation Australia's *Start Talking* program.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW, John Barilaro and Minister for Mental Health, Tanya Davies made the announcement in Sydney today whilst attending the launch of the *Start Talking* program, designed to deliver free specialist perinatal psychological counselling via video call for parents living in regional areas.

"The *Start Talking* program is so important because we know families in remote areas don't always have the same access to psychological counselling as those in the cities," Mr Barilaro said.

"Many parents are unaware of the risk of developing Perinatal Depression and Anxiety, so it is reassuring there are psychological counseling services available, if required, no matter where you live," he said.

Perinatal Depression and Anxiety (PNDA) is a condition commonly experienced by women during pregnancy and the year following the birth of a baby. New fathers are also vulnerable to PNDA.

Mrs Davies said the NSW Government funding will help facilitate up to seven one-hour video call sessions per client with a trained psychologist, as part of the client's GP-referred Mental Health Plan.

"This program will give parents across the state access to psychological support when they need it most and could prevent more serious mental health issues requiring specialist perinatal and infant mental health services," Mrs Davies said.

"Across Australia up to one in five new mums and one in 10 new dads may experience symptoms of PNDA – which is almost 100,000 expectant and new parents each year," she said.

CEO of Gidget Foundation Australia, Arabella Gibson, said that this funding and support from the NSW Government will make an enormous difference.

"People living in regional, rural and remote Australia will no longer experience the inconvenience, time and expense of having to travel significant distances simply to access these services," Ms Gibson said.

'Gidget' was the nickname of a young mother who took her own life while suffering from unrecognised postnatal depression. Family and friends established the Gidget Foundation in 2001, which has grown to assist thousands of expectant parents and their families each year.

For more information please visit www.gidgetfoundation.org.au or telephone 1300 851 758.

If you or someone you know needs crisis support please call Lifeline 13 11 14 or MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78. For mental health services visit your GP or phone the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

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