



BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

NEWS RELEASE

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TAMWORTH SELECTED FOR PILOT BLACK DOG PROGRAM

The Black Dog Institute, one of the country's leading authorities on mood disorders, will launch a major initiative in Tamworth in November in a bid to step-up support for rural communities.

The Institute, headed by Executive Director, Professor Gordon Parker, said the activities were aimed at the entire community – schoolchildren, the public at large as well as health professionals.

The program is to be held between **5-9 November** and includes:

- Public forums on mood disorders and happiness
- School talks
- Rural Ambassador presentations
- Picnic information sessions
- Workshops for health professionals

Professor Parker said the Institute had selected Tamworth as the inaugural pilot program for an initiative known as "Let's talk about depression" bush bash.

"The objective is to provide support for local people who are impacted by mood disorders, either personally or in some other way, and to make sure we leave behind a legacy that continues into the future," the Professor said.

Local Community leaders, including Federal Member for New England, Tony Windsor and State Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper are among those supporting the initiative.

The Black Dog Institute program will be launched on Wednesday 5 November at the Tamworth Town Hall. A Public Forum and Panel Discussion on *Happiness and Wellbeing* is planned for Friday 7 November.

For the health professionals such as GPs, Psychologists, Nurses and Allied Health Professionals, the Institute will be conducting education and training workshops. These sessions will focus on the Black Dog Institute model of depression, personality styles, interventions and practical strategies to assess and manage mood disorders.

These education modules are delivered by specialised clinical facilitators and accredited by the relevant professional bodies.

The Institute is also keen to showcase The MAP (Mood Assessment Program) which is set to revolutionise the way people suffering depression can obtain treatment. It is a computerised assessment and diagnostic program incorporating nearly a quarter of century of sophisticated clinical expertise in assessment, diagnosis and management planning for people suffering depression and bipolar disorders.

The MAP, the brainchild of Professor Parker, has the potential to provide General Practitioners and community health facilities with the know-how of highly skilled mood disorder specialists.

The MAP is already operating in 10 centres, including Port Macquarie in Northern NSW, and the Institute is initiating talks with local health officials on the likelihood of establishing a similar service in Tamworth.

The full program is attached while more details can be obtained from the Institute's website www.blackdoginstitute.org.au or by calling 02 9382 4516.

Entry is free to all community events.

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