

Page MP Janelle Saffin today welcomed the Gillard Labor Government's investment in a comprehensive package of measures to tackle suicide and promote better mental health.

"Health is my number one priority for Page, and I have long been lobbying for more funding for targeted mental health programs in the Page electorate.

"Today's announcement includes an important boost to psychological services and improved access to psychiatry and support services.

"It also delivers a boost to direct suicide prevention and crisis intervention services, including additional support for:

- New outreach teams for schools affected by suicide
- Crisis support hotlines including Lifeline
- Training for frontline community workers such as financial, legal and relationship counsellors, so they can better identify the needs of people at risk of suicide

The package provides tailored support measures to meet the needs of young people and programs for men with mental health problems – who are less likely to seek help for mental health issues.

Mental health is a very important issue for the Page community and I will continue to ensure that services in this area improve.

Under the Government's Health and Hospital Reforms, COAG has agreed that the Commonwealth will take full funding and policy for primary mental health care services, to better establish and coordinate mental health care for patients and their families.

Today's announcement builds on the Gillard Labor Government's recent investments in mental health which include a doubling of the current number of Headspace services for young people.

The Gillard Labor Government is also investing \$1.6 billion for 1,300 more sub-acute beds,

including more mental health sub-acute beds.

In contrast, the Coalition would fund its mental health spending by cutting primary health programs, including GP Super clinics, GP infrastructure funding and E-health. This is cutting an area where support is needed, as GPs are often the first contact point for people with mental illness.

“The Gillard Government’s new investment in mental health services will help to ensure fewer people fall through the gaps in the system, but we know there is more to do,” Ms Saffin said.