

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

Four Safe Spaces bring emotional support to people in distress

Safe Space Network launched in North Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, the Hon Emma McBride MP has officially launched four Safe Spaces in the north Brisbane and Moreton Bay region, which form the foundation of the Brisbane North Safe Space Network (BNSSN), a new local system of grass-root support for people in distress.

The Safe Spaces network is a community-based movement that provides alternative options for people experiencing distress and vulnerability across the region. The network will offer support in community spaces and places, away from hospital emergency departments.

In attendance at the launch yesterday (20 September) at Redcliffe Safe Space were the Shadow Minister for Defence Industry, Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel and Federal Member for Petrie the Hon Luke Howarth MP, and Brisbane North PHN Board Chair Dr Anita Green.

“The mental health and wellbeing of all Australians is a top priority for the Albanese Government,” Assistant Minister McBride said.

“That’s why the Commonwealth is proud to invest \$10.5 million into the Brisbane North Safe Space Network so locals have access to the care they need when they need it, close to home.

“Safe Spaces offer peer support and an alternative to emergency departments, and they will have widespread benefits to communities across North Brisbane.”

Brisbane North PHN commissioned four Safe Spaces now operating at Redcliffe Area Youth Space (RAYS), STRIDE in Caboolture, NEAMI in Strathpine and Community in Bardon. The aim of these Safe Spaces is to reduce distress and create a safety plan for people who present there by offering peer support, sensory items, community connection and pathways to clinical and community services if required. The Safe Spaces are open from 5-9pm on weekdays and participate in a coordinated calendar of opening hours across the weekends.

People of all ages experiencing emotional distress can visit a Safe Space, and receive friendly and welcoming peer support and follow-up, in a safe environment that is an alternative to presenting at hospital emergency departments.

“Safe Spaces are designed to be non-clinical, peer led support spaces for people experiencing distress, as an alternative to attending hospital emergency departments,” said Brisbane North PHN CEO Libby Dunstan.

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“The Spaces were co-designed by people with an experience of distress or suicide and include features that help people feel heard, understood and safe,” said Ms Dunstan.

The Assistant Minister also officially launched the Brisbane North Safe Space Network (BNSSN), a community-based movement to embed safety and enhanced wellbeing through human care and kindness to people who feel vulnerable or at risk of distress.

Co-designed with the community and coordinated by Wesley Mission Queensland (WMQ), the network is another level of non-clinical care, offering support in community spaces and places, to help keep people well and out of hospital.

The Safe Space Network is a unique aspect of the Safe Space model and is being piloted for the first time in the North Brisbane and Moreton Bay region.

The aim of the Safe Space network is to embed heart-based support and greater options for community connection at grassroots level through friendly chats and acts of kindness as simple as a cup of tea.

Local businesses and community centres such as libraries, cafes, hairdresser outlets and more can sign up to be part of this ground zero network that aims to break down barriers to social isolation by creating a sense of belonging in the community.

“Seeking help when in distress or suicidal can be difficult with a system that is complex and that people often find difficult to navigate,” said Wesley Mission Queensland Safe Space Coordinator Nat Scott.

“The Safe Space Network creates a compassionate village in response to that problem by putting people at the heart,” said Ms Scott. “It is a joined-up approach that offers a warm pathway of care connecting people between safe spaces and safe places and vice versa. It is a unique model that we are piloting in North Brisbane.”

The Safe Space Network establishment and coordination, and the four Safe Spaces in the north Brisbane and Moreton Bay region are being funded federally until mid-2024 through the Department of Health’s Community Health and Hospitals Program (CHHP).

For more information about Safe Spaces visit <https://mymentalhealth.org.au/safespaces>

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For more information or to talk to a spokesperson, contact Brisbane North PHN Public Relations Officer Grania Kelly at grania.kelly@brisbanenorthphn.org.au or call 0429 805084

Bardon Safe Space

Community—180 Jubilee Tce, Bardon. Open 5-9pm weekdays and 9am-1pm weekends. Tel 07-3004 0101

Caboolture Safe Space

STRIDE Caboolture—24 George St, Caboolture. Open 5-9pm weekdays and 10am-2pm weekends. Tel 07-5232 1590

Strathpine Safe Space

Neami National—Unit 6/327 Gympie Rd, Strathpine. Open 5-9pm weekdays and 3-7pm weekends. Tel 07-3493 6710

Redcliffe Safe Space

Redcliffe Area Youth Space—440 Oxley Ave, Redcliffe (on the corner, next to the Skate Park). Open 5-9pm weekdays and 3-7pm weekends. Tel 0435 827 817

Download Brochure:

<https://nwo.nyc3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/mymentalhealth/MHSafeSpacesFlyerD22032.pdf>

Editor’s note:

Photos and captions



Assistant Minister Emma McBride (centre) with (L-R) Brisbane North PHN Executive Director of Commissioned Services Paul Martin, Brisbane North PHN Board Chair Anita Green, Brisbane North PHN CEO Libby Dunstan and the Hon Luke Howarth MP.



(L-R) Assistant Minister Emma McBride, Brisbane North PHN CEO Libby Dunstan and Hon Luke Howarth MP.



Assistant Minister Emma McBride (centre) speaking with Brisbane North PHN Board Chair Anita Green (L).

For more photos and captions, contact Brisbane North PHN Public Relations Officer Grania Kelly at grania.kelly@brisbanenorthphn.org.au or call 0429 805084

About Brisbane North PHN

Brisbane North PHN is one of 31 Primary Health Networks nationwide and supports clinicians and communities within North Brisbane, Moreton Bay and parts of the Somerset region. The PHN covers approximately 4,100 km² of urban, regional and rural areas, with a population of over one million.

The key objectives of the PHN are:

- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and
- improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.