

22nd July 2022

Hon Chris Picton
Minister for Health and Wellbeing
GPO Box 2555
ADELAIDE SA 5001
ministerforhealth@sa.gov.au

Dear Minister Picton 

Subject: Support for the Lifeline Connect Program

The House of Assembly Members of Parliament for Narungga, Frome and Stuart along with the Central Local Government Region of SA (trading as the Legatus Group) and Lifeline seek your governments commitment to secure funding to continue and expand the Lifeline Connect Program (Attachment A) as a matter of urgency.

Both the Legatus Group and Lifeline have been in contact with Wellbeing SA on these matters for some time.

We would all welcome the opportunity if needed to meet and discuss this request. This letter sets out some of the background.

Background

The Legatus Group are a Regional Organisation of 15 member councils who in July 2021 released a Wellbeing Gap Analysis Legatus Group Northern Councils report (Attachment B) which identified the gaps in knowledge in the region to better understand what the future and current wellbeing needs and issues are.

Wellbeing as an issue has been identified throughout Regional South Australia and the Legatus Group raised this as a matter of high significance in 2019 because relevant communities continued to be affected by the Drought.

This has been further impacted in rural SA especially given the increasing threats of drought, other climate-related hazards and Covid-19, which have all gravely affected the socio-economic wellbeing of regional communities.

The increasing need for mental health support has further deteriorated and is currently overwhelming mental health systems in rural SA. Recent studies clearly document that community wellbeing is a prominent concern throughout the regional communities (FRRR 2021; RDA 2022; SA Drought Hub 2021).

Since the initial report has been released the SA Drought Innovation Hub has been established with its main office in Roseworthy and a node in Orroroo and the Northern and Yorke Region Drought Resilience Plan is being completed. There has been extensive if not unprecedented consultation across this region for the past 18 - 24 months on the issues around drought. The need for improved services for mental health continues to be a major if not the highest response from the region.

The Legatus Group commissioned an update on their initial report (Attachment C) which has indicated the issues around access and support for mental health have become worse whilst the recently released 2021 Census results show the region is well above the State and National average for those diagnosed with long-term mental health conditions.

The Legatus Group and Lifeline Broken Hill Country to Coast established an MoU to jointly advocate a need for sustainability and expansion of the centralised Lifeline Connect model and to secure funding support from key stakeholders for this valuable service.

All three State Members of Parliament for the region have extensive dialogue with their communities on the need for increased support for mental health. They are strong supporters of the Lifeline Connect model as a mechanism for supporting their communities to reduce the impacts of mental health and increase their wellbeing.

Yours sincerely



Hon Geoff Brock MP
Member for Stuart

Yours sincerely



Penny Pratt MP
Member for Frome

Yours sincerely



Fraser Ellis MP
Member for Narungga

Yours sincerely



Simon Millcock
Chief Executive Officer

Yours sincerely



Scott Hammond
Chief Executive Officer