



## Sid Sidebottom MP ... for a fair go in Braddon

**Media Release - February 25, 2009**

### **AN EXTRA HAND ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY**

The Rudd Government is offering an extra helping hand to people dealing with mental illness in the Devonport region.

The Personal Helpers and Mentors program will now be available around Devonport with extra funding of \$1,210,800 from the Australian Government.

Mission Australia will be providing this important service and will be funded for five full-time equivalent positions, and will build on their experience with the program in Launceston.

The Member for Braddon, Sid Sidebottom MP, welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin.

“The program assists people who cannot manage their daily activities or live independently in the community because of the impact of having a severe mental illness,” Mr Sidebottom said today.

“It’s very important to provide as much support as we can for people who have a severe mental illness.”

Personal Helpers and Mentors work one-on-one with participants, focusing on their strengths and building trust and strong relationships to help them gain greater independence.

This can be achieved through home visits, social outings or meetings where the participant feels most comfortable.

“Mental illness can have a devastating effect, leaving people feeling isolated, vulnerable and at risk of increased drug and alcohol use,” he said.

“By building their confidence and increasing their connections within the community, Personal Helpers and Mentors help participants overcome social isolation that can be so crippling for people with mental illness.”

The Rudd Labor Government has committed \$284.8 million from 2006-2011 for the program, with 76 sites currently operating around the country, including 41 in metropolitan areas and 35 in rural and regional locations.

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