



18 APRIL 2006

HEALTH MINISTER ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF PSYCHIATRIST

Minister for Health John Hatzistergos has announced the appointment of a new Chief Psychiatrist for NSW.

Dr John Basson will oversee clinical decision-making and the development of policy and programs for mental health in the newly-created role at the Centre for Mental Health.

Mr Hatzistergos said the new Chief Psychiatrist will be responsible for providing advice on mental health programs as well as encouraging an environment of clinical leadership where doctors and nurses are involved in important policy and procedural decision making processes.

Dr Basson has an impressive and extensive history in forensic psychiatry both as a clinician and working in a similar leadership role for the Scottish Department of Health.

Mr Hatzistergos today welcomed the appointment.

“Dr Basson has spent most of his career in the UK, but for the past two years he's been the Director of Forensic Mental Health at NSW Justice Health,” he explained.

“This role of Chief Psychiatrist is an important one which will see Dr Basson supervise clinical decision making and policy development for mental health in NSW.”

Dr Basson will report directly to the NSW Health director for Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health Programs.

“I'm excited about my new role as the Chief Psychiatrist as it will enable me to look at the current systems in place for mental health and further expand and improve them,” Dr Basson said.

“It is extremely encouraging that senior clinicians will be actively involved in the decision making and advice to the State Government in the mental health program,” he said.

“Having a deeper understanding of mental health issues, and how they effect the community, can only help us develop better strategies in helping people who suffer from mental illness and assisting health professionals in doing the best job they can in this difficult field.”

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