

Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

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OWP faces potential closure

It was with great disappointment that I heard the Our Wellbeing Place (OWP) was being forced to close its doors earlier this month. However, following an apparent backflip from the Government, I welcome the decision made by Country Health SA to commit to the OWP until June 30 whilst it considers the centre's long term future.

OWP has been a welcome initiative in Murray Bridge. It was used by mental health organisations, community groups and locals as a place to meet, talk, ask questions and most importantly find help. The OWP has been a terrific addition to the Murraylands community offering wide reaching support.

Reading the views of several OWP frequenters in the *Murray Valley Standard* on 17 January 2013 and hearing the stories from a number of devastated constituents who have contacted my office highlights how important the OWP has been for those living with a mental illness.

The State Liberal Party continues to listen to concerns in local communities regarding mental health, and has created the state's first Suicide Prevention portfolio.

We have also recently released a suicide prevention policy focussed on strong partnerships with non-government and community organisations.

We are committed to working with these groups to ensure the resources and training is there for them to work as effective community gatekeepers all over South Australia, because early intervention is incredibly important when it comes to mental health issues and suicide prevention.

South Australians can be confident that with a Redmond Liberal Government in 2014, our proactive policy and partnerships with community organisations will have a positive impact on those affected by suicide.

Personally, I have been a big supporter of the OWP Centre and hope to see it continue in the future.

Country Health SA has stated that it is committed to ensuring that people in rural areas have access to high quality mental health services, so I hope those living with mental illness in our local Murray Bridge community are not forced to travel distances such as to Mannum to seek help.