



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

**Media Release**  
**29 March 2011**

## **Hunter Institute of Mental Health Receives \$1.1 million Funding from Federal Labor Government for Children's Mental Health Initiative**

Sharon Grierson, Federal Member for Newcastle, today congratulated the Hunter Institute of Mental Health for successfully securing \$1.1 million in Federal Government funding for the Institute's *Response Ability Vocational Education and Training Resources: Children's Services* initiative.

The Resource was launched today in Canberra by Federal Minister Mental and Ageing Mark Butler.

The resource, which includes a DVD as well as online and other support material, is delivered under the Australian Government's Response Ability Education Project. It focuses on children's mental health and wellbeing and is a further step to ensuring the nation's children have the best possible start in life.

Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler said the resource has a focus on children from birth to age six.

"It includes six teaching films developed in authentic Australian early childhood settings, featuring case study scenarios, interviews with staff and genuine interactions with children and parents," Mr Butler said.

"The earliest years are the most important in any child's development. Their experiences during this time could affect them for the rest of their lives.

"This resource, funded by the Australian Government, enables children's services to be better prepared to support the social and emotional wellbeing of children and their families."

The resource has been developed with the help of a reference group comprised of leading early childhood educational and mental health experts.

The Federal Labor Government is investing \$1.1 million for this specific children's resource as part of the overall Response Ability undergraduate education project, bringing the total investment to \$5.5 million.

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It complements the Australian Government's KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative. As part of the Government's \$274 million 'Taking Action to Tackle Suicide' package, it is investing \$18.4 million to expand KidsMatter to a further 1700 primary schools, and \$21.6 million for services for children with mental health and development issues.

The new resource will be rolled out free of charge to 58 TAFEs and 193 private training organisations across Australia who are delivering children's service training.

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