

Head start for BlueHub



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Tim Peck, TPAV Wellbeing Manager

BlueHub, a clinical network established specifically for police and protective services officers, to assess and treat mental health injury via clinicians trained specifically to deal with the type of mental trauma suffered by police, will be launched this month following a successful trial period. The Journal spoke to TPAV Wellbeing Manager, Tim Peck, about how BlueHub will change the way police and PSOs seek and receive treatment.

By Brendan Roberts

What was the impetus behind BlueHub?

BlueHub has been established to provide evidence-based specialised mental health services for members, particularly related to effects from trauma.

It has been designed to streamline the process for members when they are accessing services for treatment for trauma-related mental health injuries. TPAV has received consistent feedback from the membership that members have not been receiving best-practice treatment and accessing appropriate services is problematic, which is compounded when members are subjected to the workers compensation process.

It was also clear that there is a lack of information and data relating to the presentation of our members when they come forward and the outcome and effectiveness of any treatment they may undertake. Through our partnership with Phoenix Australia, recognised experts in treating trauma, we hope to provide a streamlined service that delivers evidence-based treatments to our members.

How long has it been in the works?

The project has been in development for two years and is managed by a team from TPAV in partnership with Phoenix Australia. The project has been funded through a grant obtained from the Federal Government through the Police Federation of Australia. TPAV prepared and made an application for the grant and are responsible for the delivery of

the pilot, which includes Victorian-based Australian Federal Police members.

What is BlueHub designed to do?

The key aim of the pilot is to provide our membership with access to clinicians who are proficient in the use of evidenced-based treatments for trauma-related injury, including PTSD. There has been significant work undertaken to streamline the Workers Compensation process and we continue to work with Victoria Police, Gallagher Bassett and WorkSafe to improve the experience for members. A feature of the pilot is the capacity to obtain clinical information from participants to increase the understanding of the cause and effective treatments of trauma-related injury.

Who will it benefit?

All members of Victoria Police can access the pilot. The clinicians participating in the project have undertaken specific training relating to police culture and have experience in treating police members, as well as best practice trauma techniques. Members are encouraged to seek assistance through all of the resources available, if they have a trauma-related injury and are seeking advice, complete the BlueHub enquiry form on the website.

BlueHub is not a 24-hour, seven-day crisis service

Requests for information will be completed during normal office hours. If you require immediate assistance contact one of the numerous resources available on the BlueSpace Wellbeing webpage.

Where is it located?

Clinicians involved in the BlueHub project are located in hospital facilities including Epworth Private, Austin Post Trauma Recovery Service, St John Pinelodge Clinic in Dandenong, Melbourne Clinic and Geelong Clinic, as well as across a number of private practices in metropolitan Melbourne.

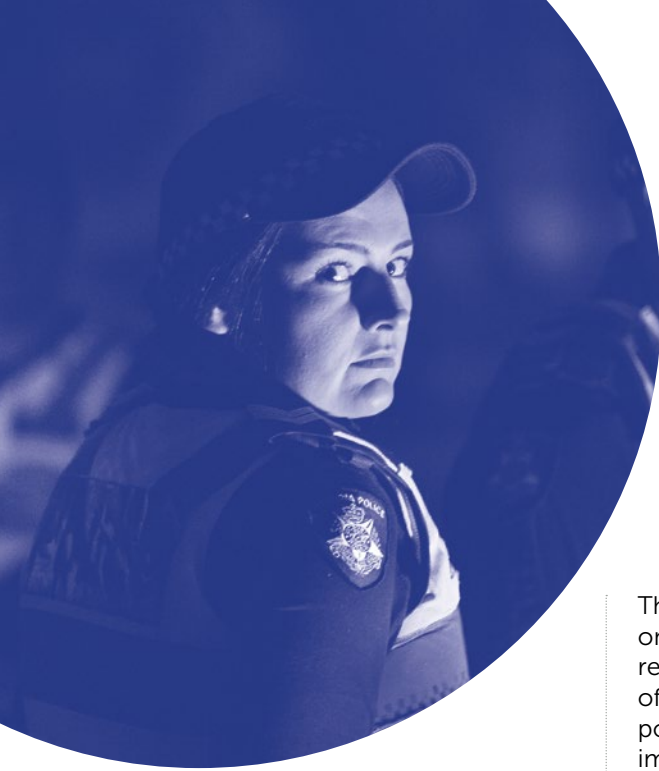
Phoenix Australia has recently added a clinician dedicated solely to the BlueHub project to assist in managing the capacity of members wishing to enter the program. With the increased reliance on telehealth services during the Covid crisis, many regional/country-based members will benefit from conducting sessions from remote locations during the pilot phase of the project.

Will police have to pay for this treatment?

TPAV will assist any member seeking access to BlueHub in the completion of a WorkCover claim form and associated documents.

Should you have an injury that is not work-related, BlueHub can be accessed through a Mental Health Treatment Care Plan with a referral from your general practitioner.

TPAV's recent advocacy for the introduction of the Provisional Payments Pilot has led to this model being rolled out across the Workers Compensation Scheme in Victoria, therefore any member who submits a WorkCover claim will receive thirteen weeks treatment, without cost, from the date of the lodgement of the claim, regardless of the status of the claim.



How does the BlueHub model make it easier for police seeking treatment, than the previous system?

Previous models have exposed members to an adversarial workers compensation model, where members were allocated clinicians primarily through the respective Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).

Unfortunately, there is minimal quality assurance around the methods of treatment being delivered, the outcome of the treatment provided or a centralised assessment of the reasons why members are accessing treatment.

BlueHub offers streamlined access to evidenced-based treatments with a quality assurance overlay to ensure we can continue to develop and evolve the model to benefit our membership.

Is BlueHub based on a similar treatment model?

The evidenced-based treatments are recommended by Phoenix Australia as detailed in *The Expert Guidelines: Diagnosis and Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*.

The BlueHub project is focussed on providing early access to the recommended treatments with the aim of providing the best opportunity for a positive outcome for the member and importantly, their family and loved ones.

Who runs and funds BlueHub?

The BlueHub project is managed out of TPAV, with Rick Burton and Vilay Phengrasmy working closely with the team from Phoenix Australia to deliver the project. TPAV was instrumental in obtaining \$2.5m over three years in the form a Federal Government grant to fund the project.

How many police and PSOs do you expect will be treated through the BlueHub model annually?

Since the soft launch of the pilot in October 2020, approximately 85 members have participated in the project. We are experiencing some delays in accessing clinicians as we look to expand the model. We currently have in excess of 60 members receiving treatment through the program.

What has the feedback been like from those who have used BlueHub?

These are among the testimonials we have received from those who have used BlueHub:

"Since starting BlueHub treatment approximately three months ago, I'm much better now than when I started. I previously saw a psychologist approximately five years ago that was

referred by the GP, however since seeing a specialist trauma psychologist through BlueHub, I notice the difference in seeing a trauma specialist and if I had gone to a specialist trauma psychologist earlier, things may have been different."

"BlueHub has been a godsend and it has been great to have a psychologist that understands and is very accommodating. On top of that they are specialists in the treatment of trauma."

How can members access treatment through BlueHub?

Members can easily access treatment via a dedicated BlueHub members' web portal – bluehub.org.au – and complete an enquiry form online.

Members who access this service can expect:

- Independent and timely assessment and treatment of their trauma-related psychological injury.
- Streamlined access to evidence-based treatment.
- Access to clinicians with an appreciation of the policing context and culture.