



## **Uniting Care help program may go national**

**BY TAMMI IRELAND**

The Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing visited Uniting Care West in Victoria Park last Thursday to see first-hand how its personal helpers and mentors (PHAMS) service worked.

Mr Butler was impressed and said the initiatives he saw during his visit could be reason enough to roll out the system nationally.

“Uniting Care West provides intensive support for people with mental illness who really need it,” he said. “It’s more for adults that are severely socially excluded and unstable.

“PHAMS provides broad psychosocial support that assists them to be connected back into community life.

“The support covers a whole range of things from

making sure the person gets to their doctor’s appointments to helping them develop or redevelop life skills.

“It’s a relatively new program that’s range has been extended for the next few years.”

Mr Butler said after a formal evaluation there would be a possibility to extend the services around to other parts of Australia.

To be eligible for support through PHAMS, people must be aged 16 or over with a severe or persistent mental illness living within their target areas.

Referral pathways include self-referral, carers, families, government or non-government mental health providers and other support services.

The program is voluntary and the person referred must be able to give informed consent to participate.

*Labor senator for Western Australia Louise Pratt, Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler and Uniting Care West acting chief executive Robert Watson met last week to discuss Uniting Care’s PHAMS service.*

