

# Hon Jim Anderton

Minister of Agriculture, Minister for Biosecurity  
Minister of Fisheries, Minister of Forestry  
Associate Minister of Health  
Associate Minister for Tertiary Education  
Minister responsible for Public Trust



Progressive Leader



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Media release

## Depression ads show strong and positive results

Associate Minister of Health, Jim Anderton was at Lifeline today to be briefed on the impact and success of the National Depression Initiative ads in which the former All Black, John Kirwan talks about his personal experiences of depression. Jim Anderton met some of the counsellors who are at the end of the phone for those seeking help from the Lifeline service, including one of John Kirwan's contemporaries, Frano Botica, who was undertaking a LivingWorks Education ASIST Suicide prevention workshop.

"When John Kirwan agreed to take part in a mental health campaign back in 1999, along with other high profile New Zealanders like Mike Chunn and Mahinarangi Tocker, I am sure 'JK' had no idea of the impact he would make on the lives of the many New Zealanders who suffer from depression," Jim Anderton said. "It is a courageous and risky thing to speak publicly about such personal matters, and this has been acknowledged in feedback about the television advertisements, in which he talks candidly about his experiences."

Early research results show that the depression ads are communicating extremely successfully, with 78 percent of the population recalling the ads, and of these, 98 percent have been very positive about them.

"Judging by the numbers calling the depression helpline on 0800 111 757, the ads are also prompting people to seek help and advice. Lifeline, which provides the service, receives an average of about 175 calls a day when the ads are on air, dropping to around 56 calls a day when they are not being broadcast. Typical of feedback recorded by counsellors on the depression helpline, are comments such as "the adverts on TV are fantastic". "

Associate Minister of Health Jim Anderton is delighted with the success of the campaign, which is managed by the Mental Health Foundation. It was Jim Anderton's personal commitment to suicide prevention that resulted in \$6.4 million being allocated for the three-year campaign as part of the Progressive Party's Coalition Agreement.

"This campaign clearly demonstrates that much can be done to improve the lives of the many New Zealanders who suffer from depression. While it is

early days, the helpline service provided by Lifeline has already helped thousands of people to get appropriate help,” he said.

“John Kirwan must take credit for reaching these people and motivating them to get the help they need.

“I have no doubt that this campaign will help to save lives, it probably already has if we believe even half of the anecdotal feedback from Lifeline counsellors. It will certainly improve the quality of life of thousands of New Zealanders,” Jim Anderton said in Auckland today.

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