

Gympie teenagers *Brainstorm* into short film finals

Tom Logan, 17, is one of a group of Gympie teenagers going head-to-head with filmmakers, on a world stage in the finals of the Heart of Gold International Short Film Festival in Gympie this weekend.

Tom who helped write, film, edit and voice the short film *Brainstorm* said his personal experience with depression had influenced his decision to take on the challenge of mental health.

“*Brainstorm* gave us the chance to tell our stories in a way that raises awareness and says you aren’t alone in this, things really do get better.

“Mental health can be a big struggle but exercise, setting a routine and seeing a counsellor were the three things that started to make my world a little bit brighter.

“When I started to exercise I slept better, I ate better and things really improved from there,” he said.

“If you’re struggling, you should be proud of everything you accomplish. It doesn’t matter if you can’t stick to it, you’ve started that journey.

“It sounds like a cliché, but with effort and courage you can push through and things do get better in the end.

Tom said the film was also an opportunity to challenge the stigma associated with mental ill health.

“Stigma sucks, you’re constantly wondering about whether someone will judge you. It adds to the doubt you already feel and makes it harder to get the help you need.

“With our different experiences we had a lot of inspiration for the film and could start to challenge those perceptions of people who are struggling.

“If *Brainstorm* makes it to the top spot, that’s great. But this is about mental health and the things we can do to make a difference,” Tom said.

One of the film’s directors, Ande Foster from Gympie Flexible Learning Centre said the film was funded by a grant from the Queensland Mental Health Commission and was supported by a number of local organisations including Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN and United Synergies.

“The young people have done an incredible job sharing an inspirational look at recovery and the power of never giving up.

“*Brainstorm* is about the young people’s experiences facing mental health challenges and overcoming them. Their honesty is powerful and inspiring,” Mr Foster said.

Australian data shows Tom isn’t the only one experiencing mental health challenges, as on average around one-in-four young people aged between 16 and 24 each year are affected by mental ill health.

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PHN Senior Manager Robb Major said the local data shows more than 5,000 young people, aged between 12 and 24, lived in the Gympie region.

“*Brainstorm* highlights issues that matter to young people and impact their mental health and wellbeing.

“It tells a story that relates to people, not just in Gympie but across our whole region.

“It’s great to see young people leading the conversation around mental health and encouraging others to speak up and get help.

“We know that getting help early can make a huge difference in reducing the impact and duration of mental ill health,” Mr Major said.

Brainstorm will screen at the Heart of Gold International Film Festival at 11:30am on Sunday, 7 October 2018. Tickets can be purchased from www.heartofgold.com.au/tickets/.

National 24/7 crisis services:

- Lifeline 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 www.kidshelpline.com.au

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