

Record funds allocated to suicide prevention training in Wide Bay

In advance of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2019, Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN (the PHN) has announced it is committing a record amount of funding towards suicide prevention training in Wide Bay.

Nearly \$500,000 will go towards implementing a variety of tailored evidence-based suicide prevention training programs across the Gympie, Maryborough and the North Burnett communities, as part of the LifeSpan approach to suicide.

The PHN's Quality Assurance Manager for mental health, alcohol and other drugs, Erica Mackay, says this is the latest of several suicide prevention initiatives in the region, which is home to one of 12 National Suicide Prevention Trial (NSPT) sites across the country.

"Because of the complexity of suicide, a one-size-fits-all approach to suicide prevention is not suitable on a national scale," Ms Mackay says.

"The trial uses the Black Dog Institute's LifeSpan model, which uses nine evidence-based strategies in a localised setting.

"Part of those strategies involves the implementation of evidence-based training aimed towards specific audiences such as primary health care workforce like GPs, the general community, and first responders.

"Research indicates that when the model is fully implemented, suicide may reduce by over 20 percent, when compared to other areas without it."

Started locally in 2017, the NSPT is a four-year pilot program with Gympie, Maryborough, Eidsvold, Mount Perry, Biggenden, Gayndah, Monto and Munduberra the main community hubs for this trial site.

In the Wide Bay region, the trial also has a special focus on men and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Richmond Fellowship Queensland Area Manager, Tim Byrne, is the locally appointed coordinator for the suicide prevention trail site in Maryborough and says the allocation of these funds will help empower everyone in the community to play a role in suicide prevention.

"In order to reduce the rate of suicide, people in the community need to have some training in how to respond to someone who is feeling distressed and link them with the services that can help," Mr Byrne says.

"RFQ and the Maryborough Suicide Prevention Network are holding a market stall this Thursday to promote those local resources as well access to some of the suicide prevention training developed for the general public.

"Joining us will be other local network partners including headspace Hervey Bay, Lifeline, Deadly Choices, Mission Australia, StandBy and Galangoor Duwalami health services.

"We are also setting up some computers at the markets so people can complete the Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) 'gatekeeper' training – free training to help people to identify the warning signs that someone may be suicidal, give them the confidence to talk to them about it, and the resources to connect them with professional care."

The Maryborough markets are held in the City Hall Green, on Adelaide and Ellena Streets in Maryborough, between 8am and 1pm.

Both Erica Mackay and Tim Byrne are available for interview.

EVENT DETAILS

Where: Maryborough markets – City Hall Green, Maryborough

Date: Thursday 5 September 2019

Time: 8am – 1pm

***** ENDS *****

For more information contact: Jess Barr, Regional Manager, Media and Communications, Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN on 5456 8100 or 0404 159 763