

Thursday, 1 September 2022

Community wellbeing and resilience grants rolled out across South Western Sydney

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) has funded more than \$700,000 in community mental health recovery grants to local organisations working on the ground to boost the wellbeing and resilience of our community.

A total of 10 community projects received grants of between \$13,000 and \$99,000 to continue to support recovery and promote good mental health and wellbeing on the back to the recent floods and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mental Health Recovery Grants are an initiative of SWSPHN, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, as a measure to increase mental health and wellbeing activities within our region and supporting recovery.

The grants also aim to reduce stigma and promote help seeking, focusing on engaging vulnerable population groups disproportionately impacted by pandemic and disaster.

SWSPHN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Keith McDonald PhD, said the grants were an important boost for our community as we continued to recover.

“A big focus for SWSPHN is to ensure local people and communities have access to coordinated and tailored mental health support when and where needed to help people recover from the effects of COVID-19 and the various natural disasters which affected the region,” Dr McDonald said.

“The past few years have been challenging. There are so many people still doing it tough and feeling the effects of COVID-19 lockdowns and isolation and many of our communities have been impacted by flooding during this same time. And let’s not forget, many of the same communities are still recovering from devastating bushfires of 2019.

“Through these grants we recognise the importance of grassroots community groups. The grants provide opportunity for communities to come together to foster resilience and healing, they aim to ensure local people and communities have access to the support needed to help them recover.”

A LIST OF GRANT RECIPIENTS IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

South Western Sydney PHN is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting general practitioners, practice nurses and other primary health providers to deliver the best possible care for their patients. Our aim is to improve access to quality local healthcare for all residents living in the Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs, areas which include but are not exclusive to the major traditional nations of Dharawal (Tharawal) and Gundangarra (Gandangara).

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the waters and lands on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

These grants are supported by funding from the Australian Government through the PHN Program.

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GRANT RECIPIENTS ARE:

Flex Allied Health in Liverpool: is running **Emerge'n'see**, free weekly group therapy sessions offered by a psychologist for people negatively affected by COVID-19, natural disasters, economic stresses, or other issues affecting their mental health. They will also identify at-risk individuals who may require further assistance to have one-on-one sessions with a psychologist. Their on-board physiotherapist and dietician will ensure improved outcomes for physical health.

Inside Out Recovery across Macarthur, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee: is running the **Eating the Elephant** hoarding support program, where qualified counsellors who understand the complex nature of hoarding work with people to assist in the identification of the core reasons for hoarding. Psychosocial Declutter Coaches support people to develop skills and strategies to declutter and a cleaning crew, trained in trauma-informed care and training programs both for consumers and community services sector workers will be provided.

Iris Foundation: offers **Resilience First Aid across the region**, a two-day mental health certification teaching strength-based skills to support resilience in others and build meaningful relationships to aid recovery from adversity. They have 50 trained mental health champions in place who actively boost resilience and mental health in the community.

Learning Links: hosts the **Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing Program** across the region, where psychologists work within five school communities to provide professional support, psychological therapies and psychosocial services to students, teachers and local parents and families to help address and improve mental health and emotional wellbeing during and following these unprecedented times.

Maria Calocerinos: will deliver **culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Mental Health First Aid** to CALD community leaders and community workers to assist people from CALD backgrounds to have a better understanding of mental health and how they can refer their clients and community members to services.

Open Support: will run **Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Sessions across South Western Sydney for women on temporary visas escaping domestic and family violence**, offering two six-week programs (12 sessions in total) addressing the mental health impact of domestic violence, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Stress and Trauma Clinic in the Southern Highlands: will host **The Recovery Project**, the facilitation of structured intensive workshops for community members relating to managing COVID fatigue, burn out, vicarious traumatisation and navigating mental health systems. The project also includes an eight-week cognitive behavioural therapy program for children aged seven to 13 years of age teaching anxiety management skills and emotional regulation in the wake of the natural disasters that have occurred over a large part of their lifespan and aim to improve lifestyle factors, including sleep practices, nutrition and bolstering a sense of belonging within their community.

The MacKillop Institute: will hold **Seasons for Growth**, capacity building and resilience workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve health literacy and build resilience. The program will also deliver parent/carer and adult information sessions to support school and community organisations.

White Waratah Workshops, based in Balmoral Village: will facilitate **Project Restore**, providing eight to 10 camps/retreats at the Taps Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops, for community members impacted by the recent cascading natural disasters. The camps will include workshops that focus on improving individual and collective wellbeing, and art workshops, as an opportunity to experience respite with peers.

Wildflower Holistic Services in Bargo: will host its **Restore, Refocus, Replenish You** workshops delivered across 10 identified industry-specific groups (police, ambulance, fire, nurses, aged care/disability, hospital staff, allied health professionals, teachers, supermarket attendees and parents), whereby each group will be formed with 10 participants to promote social connectedness, building better understanding, and a space to engage with mental health concerns. Workshops focus on the mental, emotional and physical health of the individual.