

# DROUGHT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Including the Rural Outreach Program - est. 2018



## PURPOSE

- Improve the health and well-being of community members who are struggling to deal with tough times in their lives
- Offer support with local service navigation and collaboration
- Help to overcome barriers in access to services, mental health stigma, lengthy travel distances, long wait times, limited service delivery hours and financial costs
- Non-clinical mental health support
- Capacity building by providing mental health first aid training across all of the four shires of the Wimmera
- Funding to the community to hold events encouraging social inclusion and building community resilience

## WHY?

Our region has a higher mental health and suicide rate. Couple this with compounding issues of lack of services and tyranny of distance. In response to many years of Drought a regional seasonal conditions committee was formed across many sectors and areas of the community including health, local government, agriculture, business, education and Water authority. Through the Wimmera Care Partnership, collective seasonal funds were pooled with additional funding from DHHS and Westvic PHN to commence the drought support program to respond to the mental health issues in the region. Through this funding the Rural Outreach program is funded until June 2020.

*"you've got your professionals like the health services and all that but the waiting time for anybody to talk with there can be 8 weeks "*

*"the service was ongoing & very supportive with lots of check-ins "*

*"it was great having them come to my house as I have kids...and now my boys have a bond with the Rural Outreach worker too "*

*"i've been able to ring day or night which I have done a couple of times, in tears...he has been a lifesaver "*

*"there should be more support like this - it gave me the support and courage to leave and believe in myself again "*

## PARTNERS

- Horsham Rural City Council
- Hindmarsh Shire
- Woomelang Bush Nursing Centre
- Western Victoria Primary Health Network
- West Wimmera Health Service
- West Wimmera Shire
- Yarriambiack Shire
- Harrow Bush Nursing Centre
- Rural Northwest Health
- Edenhope Memorial and District Hospital

## OUTCOMES

- over 130 people in situational distress have been seen by the Rural Outreach Team in a timely manner (1 to 3 days)
- 36% of people have had a visit in their own home, with other visits happening in schools and workplaces
- over 30 events and activities bringing communities across all four shires together have been supported by funds from this program (over \$22k)
- a trusted program amongst service providers who are increasing referrals
- instrumental in a local led post suicide intervention project commencing in the region across multiple organisations/agencies, regional and state-wide