

The Rural Outreach Program

Rural & Regional Mental Health Initiative

Rural suicide and mental health issues cause enormous distress to individuals, families and communities and the focus must be on its prevention. This application provides real life feedback, data and research outcomes from the past three years of the Rural Outreach Program, all relevant reports can be viewed at www.edmh.org.au



'as we recover from this pandemic, we can't lose sight of what matters most—the health and wellbeing of our families, friends and communities.'

VICTORIAN PREMIER DAN ANDREWS

source: Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System report p13

What we need

To provide assistance for those in need in the right place and in a timely manner. We are seeking a further three-year funding agreement to continue the community-based service provision of the Rural Outreach Program. Allowing its continued capacity to respond to the immediate needs of people living in rural communities across the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region.

Total Investment \$570K per year

Why we need it

The Rural Outreach Program is a well-regarded service; it has met the needs of clients, local government and health services, schools, agricultural and small business creating a positive impact across the Wimmera and Southern Mallee regions.

This model has been developed as a place-based response, lead by Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital serving Yarriambiack, West Wimmera, Horsham Rural City and Hindmarsh local governments and their surrounding communities across regional Victoria.

This model is accessible in design, responsive to community need and is able to be duplicated in any setting with minimal tailoring. The program has been underpinned by cross-sector partnerships and co-designed with rural communities to obtain best-practice consumer-centred care

The conclusion of the Rural Outreach Program would see these clients referred directly into mental health services without support whilst waiting to access and navigate the service system. It should be noted that clients would potentially be waiting an extended period of time up to six months, before accessing services where their mental health could further decline or where they withdraw and do not access the service.

Further to this, the Rural Outreach Program currently incorporates community engagement, early intervention and mental health promotion and training activities. All community outreach work assists in building community resilience whilst reducing the stigma associated with mental ill health.

We ask you to embed the Rural Outreach Program into our health workforce as the frontline first responder agency for those most at risk of situational distress and suicide.

How the investment would be allocated

Budget Item	Year	Amount
Operational Funding - 3 FTE Rural Outreach Workers - 0.8 FTE Program Management - Research and development to include evaluation and validation - All staffing on-costs - Motor vehicle and expenses - Ongoing IT support - Staff development costs - Resources for community engagement and education	Year 1	\$532,575.00
	Year 2	\$583,437.00
	Year 3	\$593,988.00
TOTAL 3-year Investment		\$1,710,000.00

For more information please contact:

Andrew Saunders, Chief Executive Officer or Robyn Salt, Primary Health Manager
 Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital.
phone (03) 5585 9800, email robyns@edmh.org.au; andrews@edmh.org.au

This program is a collaborative effort from the following organisations



1336

Visits

987

hours of
support to the
communities

27.42%

supported mental
wellbeing

3.85%

supported
people with
complex
mental &
medical needs.

2.59%

were to people at
risk of suicide,
their family &
friends

4.16%

were
experiencing
grief or loss

The Rural Outreach Program

January 1 2020 -
February 28 2021

4.67%

were about
financial
worries

0.82%

involved family
violence

26.41%

concerned
family issue or
illness

3.33%

were about
work
concerns

1.11%

involved
loneliness &
isolation

9.15%

were supporting
people on waitlists
and during
referrals

4.94%

concerning
legal issues

2.42%

were drug &
alcohol related

9.17%

assisting with
COVID-19
related issues