

RURAL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH PROGRAM LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT YOUTH IN RURAL WESTERN NSW

Mental health challenges in rural areas of Australia are particularly concerning, with statistics showing that one in four young people experience mental health concerns over a 12-month period. To help tackle this significant issue, The Benevolent Society – one of Australia’s oldest charities – has partnered with Bila Muuji Aboriginal Corporation Health Service – an organisation that provides Primary Health Care representation to the Aboriginal Medical Services across the Western and Far West of NSW – to offer the Rural Youth Mental Health (RYMH) service.

The Rural Youth Mental Health Service is a mobile community outreach program to support young people between the ages of 12 and 25 in rural areas of NSW, to overcome mental health challenges and isolation. The program is funded by the Western New South Wales Primary Health Network.

The official launch of the RYMH service coincides with Mental Health Month 2018, with a BBQ event featuring fun activities and information about youth wellbeing to be held at Parkes High School Multipurpose Centre (2A Albert Street, Parkes NSW) on Monday 22 October, from 1.30pm-3.30pm.

The RYMH service is FREE of charge and offers therapeutic services, group work and case management services within community centres, schools, homes, TAFE and other outreach settings across 11 regional areas of NSW: Cobar, Condobolin, Coonabarabran, Coonamble, Cowra, Forbes, Gilgandra, Nyngan, Narromine, Parkes and Walgett. Flexible clinical services will be provided by mental health clinicians, both within and after business-hours.

“All of our work is focused on building the social and emotional wellbeing of young people,” said Amie Carrington, Manager Child and Family Services Western NSW for The Benevolent Society.

“We want to help young people recognise and manage their mental health concerns. We want to reduce the barriers that young people face to accessing primary mental health services in rural NSW and reduce the impact of a range of difficulties on a young person’s health and wellbeing.

“Our aim is to work together with young people to arrange a personal service based on their own strengths and needs,” added Ms Carrington. “We will also focus on the young person’s broader needs such as housing, education, employment, physical health and social supports, and take an integrative approach to working with other services”.

CEO of Bila Muuji Phil Naden agreed: “The success of this project will be because of the partnership arrangement with The Benevolent Society and Bila Muuji. The integrity of this project will be upheld by both organisations to ensure that our core focus is to work with youth people and to improve their overall Social and Emotional Wellbeing and mental health,” said Mr Naden.

CEO Western NSW Primary Health Network, Andrew Harvey said: “Western NSW Primary Health Network is proud to fund this service which will provide much-needed support for young people experiencing mental health issues.

“Mental health and wellbeing is a priority for the PHN and the RYMH service will help countless communities in our region,” added Mr Harvey.

The RYMH service is open to anybody aged 12-25 who is concerned about their mental health or is experiencing mental health challenges like early warning signs of anxiety or depression. A mental health diagnosis or GP referral is not required and participation is voluntary.

The RYMH program is an inclusive service, delivered in the community and provided to young people who may be feeling isolated, alone and unsure of what support they need, may not have accessed mental health services before, and need help connecting with mental health services.

For more information and to connect with RYMH, call 1800-236-762 or 0401-673-747, email rymh@benevolent.org.au or check-out benevolent.org.au or facebook.com/ruralyouthmentalhealth

FOR ALL MEDIA ENQUIRIES – INCLUDING INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES – PLEASE CONTACT:

Susan Darwiche Mb: 0414-706-704 E: susan.darwiche@benevolent.org.au

About The Benevolent Society - Australia's first charity, working as a catalyst for social justice and change for over 200 years. Founded in 1813, The Benevolent Society advocates for a better life for all Australians, and provides in-home services for older Australians, and people with disability, as well as providing programs in Family support and early intervention. We help people age well and live their best lives, staying in their homes wherever possible. For more information, please visit benevolent.org.au, on Facebook/thebenevolentsociety or on Twitter - @BenevolentAU

ⁱ SOURCE: 'Lifting the Weight' – ReachOut Australia and Mission Australia

– ENDS –