WAAMH
Western Australian Association for Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 1967-2017 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

MEDIA RELEASE **6 October 2017**

RECORD NUMBER OF COMMUNITY EVENTS AS ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK KICKS OFF

From Kalgoorlie to Nannup, Broome to Esperance, on the eve of Mental Health Week 2017, the WA community is set to reduce the stigma around mental health issues and raise awareness via over 100 events being held by community groups throughout the state from October 7-14.

The events are the largest number ever registered as part of Mental Health Week in WA and double the number registered in 2016.

Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) CEO Rod Astbury said it was heartening to see the commitment of the many community groups holding an event to starting a conversation about mental health in their area and reducing the silence that surrounded having a mental health issue in years gone by.

“What this large number of events tells us is that in 100 communities around WA there are people there who are willing to listen and willing to act to ensure anyone experiencing mental health challenges can connect with the help they need,” Mr Astbury said.

“It’s part of real momentum we see happening where mental health is no longer a taboo subject, but something to be nurtured, celebrated and protected,” he said. “Mental Health Week is a great way to check in each year, in the midst of our busy lives, about how those around us are going and how we can promote positive mental health in the community.”

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Mental Health Week, with a particular emphasis on connecting with nature via the theme “Connect with nature, connect with community, connect with self for mental wellbeing” and, for the first time, a complementary Aboriginal theme recognising the importance of country: “Connect with country, community and you for strong social and emotional wellbeing”.

The Official Opening of 2017 Mental Health Week will take place tomorrow (October 7) in Kalgoorlie, with the grand finale on the evening of October 14th at the State Theatre of WA at the annual charity comedy night, Stand Up! For Comedy.

Tuesday, October 10 marks World Mental Health Day, with Mental Health Australia encouraging Australians to shed a more positive light on mental health via its “Do You See What I See?” campaign at 1010.org.au.

All members of the public are welcome at events during Mental Health Week and the majority are made available at no or minimal cost via ticket allocations for unwaged mental health consumers and carers. Many community groups have been supported to hold their own event during the week with a community grant scheme, with thanks to Lotterywest.

Minister for Mental Health the Hon Roger Cook, Parliamentary Secretary the Hon Alanna Clohesy and Mental Health Commissioner Timothy Marney will appear at various events throughout the week.

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Fact file – Mental Health Week

- Mental Health Week runs from October 7-14, 2017
- For more events and information, visit mhw.waamh.org.au
- A full listing of events during the week
- Facebook: @mentalhealthweek
- Instagram: @mentalhealthweekwa
- Twitter: @TheWAAMH #MHW2017 and #MHWTURNS50
- In WA, Mental Health Week is presented by the Western Australian Association for Mental Health on behalf of the Mental Health Commission

Mental health statistics

- One in five people experiences mental health issues
- Mental health issues cost the Australian economy $60 billion per annum
- Four out five people who need community mental health support in WA are currently unable to access the support they need[1]

With special thanks to the 2017 Mental Health Week sponsors & supporters

Lotterywest	Chandler McLeod	All of Me	Anglicare WA
Mental Health Commission	Rise Network	MercyCare	The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
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[1] Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025: Better Choices. Better Lives.