

Mental health support locally grown in Albany

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- **Community members, including support, youth and healthcare workers from Albany and surrounding areas have just graduated with a *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health, equipping them with the skills to provide much needed mental health support to their communities.**
- ***Grow Local* is a free community training initiative developed by WA Primary Health Alliance in response to difficulties in recruiting and retaining culturally appropriate mental health workers in regional areas.**

Despite the challenges this year due to COVID-19, *Grow Local* participants have worked hard towards completing the program, meaning communities throughout Western Australia will have additional mental health support available to those who may be struggling.

The program has proven to not only be an effective way of meeting these community needs, but also a popular one, with more than 60 participants graduating in towns throughout the state in the coming weeks.

The training is provided to community in partnership with the Australian Medical Association (WA), along with support from local organisations including Palmerston and Greenskills, who offered the use of their meeting rooms for the monthly workshops.

This activity is supported through funding provided by the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Comments attributed to Federal Member for O'Connor, Rick Wilson:

"I'm proud to say that this Australian Government funded initiative has increased the number of qualified mental health workers in the region whilst also encouraging more people to access the support they need.

"The knowledge and expertise of these *Grow Local* graduates will really strengthen the local mental health workforce, complementing the support provided by local GPs and healthcare professionals," Mr Wilson said.

Comments attributed to WAPHA Regional Manager Great Southern, Lesley Pearson:

"The community of Albany and surrounds can now benefit from our *Grow Local* graduates who understand local issues and have the trust of their communities to deliver grassroots suicide prevention and mental health support.

"*Grow Local* graduates will be supporting people from all ages and backgrounds who are struggling with their mental wellbeing. They are all strongly invested in their community and we are very proud of them," Ms Pearson said.

MEDIA RELEASE



Comments attributed to Grow Local Albany course participants:

“The Certificate IV course in Mental Health was a good way to help me refine skills and gain new insight into connecting with and relating to people from different walks of life. It reinforced the need for physical and emotional self-care and maintaining legislative standards for the safety of both the people I work with and myself as a support worker. I enjoyed the practical way in which it was delivered and being able to spend time in the classroom face-to-face with others who are passionate about working in this field. I appreciate the recognition provided by the course and being able to add this qualification to my resume,” David said.

“It was an opportunity for me to better my education to improve my knowledge and to pass on what I have learnt to help my Noongar community,” Leah said.

“What a wonderful opportunity it has been to study the Certificate IV in Mental Health. The teachers were wonderful, and it has also been such a privilege to have the opportunity to learn from them. This has given me an opportunity I would otherwise not been able to afford and made a difference in my life and the lives of the people I support,” Johnette said.

Comments attributed to Australian Medical Association (WA) General Manager AMA Training & Recruitment, Jan Norberger:

“AMA Training is very proud to be involved with the WA Primary Health Alliance *Grow Local* program and delighted to see so many people increase their knowledge, capacity and their ability to better support those most in need in regional Western Australian communities.

“Whilst it has been a difficult year for many, it is also encouraging to know that those supporting people experiencing mental health issues are more equipped and ready to help,” Mr Norberger said.

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