

## Mental health support locally grown in Bunbury

30 November 2020

- **Community members, including support, youth and healthcare workers from Bunbury and surrounding areas have just graduated with a *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health, equipping them with the skills to provide much needed culturally sensitive 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 their *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health, 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 Milligan House, 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 Forrest, Nola Marino:**

“The *Grow Local* program is a fantastic initiative, empowering our local community to support those who are experiencing mental health issues or struggling to cope with the challenges they’re facing.

“Equipping our community with the right skills to strengthen the local mental health workforce and complement the support provided by local GPs and healthcare professionals means more people can access the support they need,” Ms Marino said.

### **Comments attributed to WAPHA Regional Manager South West, Marina Johns:**

“The *Grow Local* Bunbury graduation was much more than a recognition of program completion; it was a genuine celebration of the group’s achievements and friendships that have developed over the past two years.

“The program has brought together a group of passionate people who are eager to use their skills to benefit their local community and established some great connections.

“Through connecting with the staff at Milligan House, one of the *Grow Local* participants who

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works with the South West Aboriginal Medical Service, Eva, has created a positive, inclusive space for the Yorgas Baldja group to meet weekly.

“The impact the program has within the local community is far reaching and highly valuable,” Ms Johns said.

## **Comments attributed to Grow Local Bunbury course participants:**

“The Certificate IV Mental Health is something I’ve dreamed of doing for years. Unfortunately, I was never able to meet the costs, so I put it aside and carried on. When I saw the *Grow Local* program advertised, I quickly applied and crossed my fingers that I’d be one of the lucky ones chosen. This course has been great, Tracie our trainer was amazing and helped all of us achieve. Thank you so much WA Primary Health Alliance for funding this and for helping me make this dream of mine come true. I am sixty years old and I am proof that age is not a barrier. If I can do it, anyone can,” said Eva.

“I have just landed a new job; and the *Grow Local* Certificate IV Mental Health made the difference in me securing this job,” said Donna.

## **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.

## **Comments attributed to Australian Medical Association (WA) Mental Health Trainer and Assessor, Tracie Booth:**

“I am so incredibly proud of the *Grow Local* participants and all that they have achieved, especially given the challenging year that has just been.

“Their determination to complete their Certificate IV in Mental Health is remarkable and has developed in them a resilience and strength which will serve them very well in helping those most vulnerable in the local community,” Ms Booth said.

## **ENDS**

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