

Mental health support locally grown in Kalgoorlie

2 December 2020

- **Community members, including support, youth and healthcare workers from Kalgoorlie 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 the Rural Clinical School and Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who offered the use of their training rooms for the 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:

“Empowering our local community with the knowledge and skills to support those who are struggling with their mental health will really strengthen the local mental health workforce and complement the support provided by local GPs and healthcare professionals.

“*Grow Local* is a fantastic initiative that also helps shift the perception of mental health issues, that its ok to seek help and your community is there to support you,” Mr Wilson said.

Comments attributed to WAPHA Regional Manager Goldfields, Sarah Brown:

“In what has been a challenging year, our *Grow Local* participants have shown commitment and perseverance over the past 18 months to obtain their Certificate IV in Mental Health.

“This dedicated group are now equipped with knowledge and skills that will strengthen the local mental health workforce and help develop capacity within our local communities, who often struggle to get timely and appropriate support for mental health issues.

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Comments attributed to Grow Local Kalgoorlie course participants:

“My journey doing the Certificate IV in Mental Health was fantastic. The program gave me a better understanding of mental health issues, and how to approach and respond to vulnerable people, to have compassion and empathy. Because everyone has a story and everyone deserves the best support possible,” said Linda.

“I did the *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health as I wanted to build on my skills and knowledge to help me in my role as a peer worker. While I have an undergraduate degree in psychology, that didn’t teach me about the ins and outs of working for a mental health service or about mental health recovery, which is essential knowledge for a peer worker. I’m extremely grateful to have been a part of this program, particularly with the challenges of studying in a rural area,” said Jane.

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.

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