

Mental health support locally grown in Karratha

10 December 2020

- **Community members, including pharmacy, youth workers, police and healthcare workers from Karratha 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 WA Centre for Rural Health, who generously provided the use of their meeting room in the Karratha Health Hub 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 Durack, Melissa Price:

“This year has been challenging for many and seeking help for mental health issues is not always easy. Empowering members of our local community with skills to support those who need it is invaluable and goes a long way to changing the stigma around mental health.

“Through delivering training locally, the *Grow Local* initiative has given the community, some who may otherwise not been able, the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of mental health issues, further strengthening the mental health workforce in the region,” Ms Price said.

Comments attributed to WAPHA Regional Manager Pilbara, Winsome Henry:

“The Pilbara now has 30 additional community members from a wide range of backgrounds, who are able to move into a career in mental health, utilise their new qualifications in their current role, or provide much needed wellbeing support for other community and family members.

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“The passion of AMA (WA) Trainer Tracie Booth has driven the students to achieve this amazing result. We look forward to seeing the journeys of the graduates unfold and we are certain they will have an extremely positive impact on their respective communities.

“It has been a pleasure for WA Primary Health Alliance to partner with AMA (WA) in the *Grow Local* Certificate IV Mental Health program,” said Winsome.

Comments attributed to *Grow Local* Karratha course participants:

“I did not realise until I started the *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health how invaluable it would be in my own life and workplace. The course has changed my whole perception of mental health and I have a healthier understanding and ability to address my own emotional issues, as well as support my family and others in need. I feel I can contribute more to the community in a healthier way with what I have learnt,” said Marie.

“Completing the *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health is a huge accomplishment for me. My new skills will help me in my role supporting community members and their mental wellbeing, if they ever need to talk or yarn. Thank you all who made it possible, I really did appreciate this course and found value in each module. What a positive way to finish off 2020 for myself and 30 other graduates,” said Davina.

“Having just completed the *Grow Local* Certificate IV in Mental Health I want to thank WA Primary Health Alliance and AMA (WA) for providing me with this learning opportunity here in Karratha. As a CEO, it provided me with a better understanding of the importance of mental health in our communities and the knowledge to support my staff through changes in the work environment. The course also gave me an insight into the importance of involving our clients in service delivery changes and the impact these changes may have on their lives,” said Vicki.

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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