

MEDIA RELEASE

New calendar celebrates community

15 November 2019

Community members are invited to the launch of the 2020 Connect Benalla calendar, published as part of Murray PHN's place-based suicide prevention trial.

The launch will take place on Friday 22 November, 5.30pm at the Lakeside Community Centre, Benalla Showgrounds. Former Benalla local and now mental health advocate Michael Donehue will share his story about being diagnosed with depression at 21 to today speaking to groups across Australia and New Zealand to help empower and educate communities on mental health and wellbeing. Adam Toms, local youth worker and musician will also perform at the event.

The calendar, which will be distributed free to every household in Benalla, focuses on people, community and landscapes, with listings for local events such as the Benalla Show. It also includes tips on how to start a conversation with someone who may be thinking about suicide.

The Benalla suicide prevention community taskforce has been heavily involved throughout the 12-month planning process, helping to identify target populations and local imagery. Each month features different population groups such as farmers and young people, with support and help information specific to them.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said that the calendar was a great opportunity to engage all community members, to continue to encourage conversations around mental health and suicide prevention over the coming year.

"The calendar focuses on the strengths of the community, reminding everyone that connections matter, and hope and purpose are important components of maintaining positive mental health," he said. "Best of all, it will be accessible to every home when and if they need it."

Murray PHN would like to thank all of the people and organisations - taskforce members, Benalla Ensign, Benalla Rural City Council and street artists - who have contributed the calendar. Community members are all welcome at the launch, but please RSVP for catering purposes to Emma Knapp, Murray PHN, on 0408 779 218.

Benalla is one of 12 locations taking part in Victorian Government trials to develop local strategies to prevent suicide. This work forms part of the Victorian Suicide Prevention Framework 2016-2025, which aims to halve the state's suicide rates by 2025.

If you are in an emergency or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Other services include Lifeline – 13 13 14 or lifeline.org.au or Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467 or suicidcallbackservice.org.au

A note on reporting suicide: *There is extensive literature linking media reporting of suicide with increased suicide rates. Suicidal behaviour can be 'learned' from the media when reports are sensationalised, focus on celebrities, are repeated, and explicitly describe location and method details. Evidence suggests that responsible reporting of suicide by the media can reduce suicide rates. Mindframe Australia Media Guidelines support the media to report suicide accurately, responsibly, and ethically. A summary version of these guidelines available from <https://mindframe.org.au/industry-hubs/for-media> or on the Mindframe App.*



Contact details

For more details, Amity Bradford, Communications Specialist e: abradford@murrayphn.org.au or t: 0436 820 014.

