



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mens' mental health takes centre stage

TO CELEBRATE Mental Health Week, the Western Australian Association for Mental Health has partnered with ARENA Arts, to launch a home grown play focused on men's mental health and seeking help.

The play, *Merry Go Round* will be first performed on World Mental Health Day - Friday, October 10 -as part of the official Mental Health Week program.

Merry Go Round was written with the express purpose of encouraging men to ask for help when they were suffering from depression.

"The story follows Alan, who is recovering from a dark time in his life that saw him attempt suicide," Merry Go Round playwright and director Bree Vreedenburgh said.

"Alan is one of the Aussie tough guys, who learns the hard way to ask for help – but who, luckily, does ask for help before it's too late. When I first had the idea for the show, I was at the local library and saw a poster encouraging men to get help when they were having depressive thoughts.

"I decided then to write the show from a guy's perspective, because it's much harder for guys to ask for help – it takes them right out of their comfort zones, and when they are already feeling horrible, it's twice as difficult."

Vreedenburgh said the show helped men to see there was nothing weak about asking for help, and attempted to remove some of the mystery surrounding what actually happens when people do ask for help.

WAAMH is delighted Vreedenburgh has decided to launch her play during such a monumental week for the community.

Mental Health Week in WA is in its 47th year and always celebrated around World Mental Health Day, held annually on October 10. This year's theme is 'Make a Move Towards Better Mental Health.'

'Make a Move' encourages people to take action, no matter how big or small, each day in order to be mentally healthy and gain an overall sense of wellbeing.

WAAMH executive director Rod Astbury recommended individuals discover what being mentally healthy meant to them, and make a move to take action.

"Making a move towards better mental health means reaching out to help others, looking after your physical health, resting your mind by finding time to relax, joining a community event or activity, picking up tips for better mental health and being aware of your emotional, mental and physical state," Astbury said. "Mental Health Week is also about moving attitudes about mental health."

Tickets are to the show are \$20 and on sale at: <http://www.trybooking.com/90691> (All ticket proceeds will go to mens' mental health charity groups.)

Further information on Mental Health Week in WA can be found at <http://mhw.waamh.org.au/>

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Interview Opportunities: WAAMH Executive Director Rod Astbury

Merry Go Round Playwright, Actor and Director Bree Vreedenburgh