

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**17 August 2016**

## **Mental Health Week 2016 has something for everyone**

WESTERN Australia's peak body for community mental health, the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), in association with the Mental Health Commission and Lotterywest are proud to launch the program for WA's 2016 Mental Health Week.

Incorporating the theme of Act-Belong-Commit once again, with a focus on suicide prevention, 'Together We Can Save Lives', this year's Mental Health Week will host more than 50 events and activities across the State to increase community awareness and reduce the stigma about mental health. A series of events will run in metropolitan Perth alongside a regional events program. Grants will be available for community organisations to run their own events.

The week will open on Saturday 8 October with a Wildcats game at the Perth Arena starring Mental Health Week Ambassador, Greg Hire. The game will promote physical activity and belonging to a team as positive measures to protect our mental health. Unwaged mental health consumers and carers have been allocated tickets to this event, and awareness of mental health will be raised amongst an audience of 14,000 people. Tickets will be available to the general public soon via Ticketek.

A free, all-ages family fun day will be held at Elizabeth Quay on Sunday 9 October offering everyone the opportunity to get involved in a range of activities, including hula hooping, yoga, netball, volleyball and giant knitting.

WAAMH's President Alison Xamon said that being active, having a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose in life all contribute to happiness and good mental health.

"Everyone has the ability to adopt the Act-Belong-Commit approach to suit their lifestyle and to build and maintain better mental health," Ms Xamon said. "Many of the events on during Mental Health Week will provide examples of everyday activities people can undertake to maintain good mental health."

The week will also have a focus on suicide prevention, 'Together We Can Save Lives', hosting an industry-leader forum for the mental health sector on the week's Suicide Prevention Day, Thursday 13 October. The day will also offer an opportunity for members of the public to produce artwork in memory of a family member or loved one in a Touched by Suicide Workshop.

Peak body representing the community-based mental health sector in WA.  
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“As someone whose own life has been deeply and permanently impacted as the result of a loved one’s suicide, I hope that bringing attention to the urgent matter of suicide prevention during Mental Health Week will help the community better understand the issue and further help inform recommendations for government from sector leaders and those with lived experience of losing a loved one to suicide,” Ms Xamon said.

The week will also include Workplace Wellness sessions, an Arts Celebration Night, a Nyoongar People’s Experience of Mental Health event and a Parenting Forum. Additionally, the week will coincide with a 7-week Jamie’s Ministry of Food program for people with lived-experience of mental illness, at ECU’s Joondalup campus.

Following on from last year’s sell-out comedy night, a comedy show at the State Theatre Centre will close 2016 Mental Health Week in a night of laughs and light entertainment. Tickets to the event, called Stand Up! for Comedy, on Saturday 15 October will be on sale to the general public through Ticketek on 17 August. Unwaged mental health consumers and carers have also been allocated tickets to this event.

Opportunities for organisations to sponsor the week and align with events including the Elizabeth Quay family fun day and the Nyoongar People’s Experience of Mental Health event are still available.

"I encourage organisations to consider sponsoring these worthwhile events which directly, positively impact the mental health of the WA community," Ms Xamon said. "Through Mental Health Week, aligned organisations can promote their products, services and brands through cause-related marketing to a large portion of the WA community." To find out more about sponsoring the week, view <http://mhw.waamh.org.au/sponsor>

"I also encourage people to get along to as many events as possible during Mental Health Week," Ms Xamon said. "There are many public and community-based services out there ready to provide support."

Minister for Mental Health the Hon Andrea Mitchell and Mental Health Commissioner Timothy Marney will appear at various events throughout the week.

For more information, visit <http://mhw.waamh.org.au>

#### Fact File

- Mental Health Week runs October 8-15, 2016
- For more events and information, visit <http://mhw.waamh.org.au>

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- In WA, Mental Health Week is co-ordinated by the Mental Health Commission in partnership with the Western Australian Association for Mental Health
- Act-Belong-Commit in association with Together We Can Save Lives are the themes for WA's 2016 Mental Health Week.
- Suicide is a complex issue with multiple interrelated factors. There are, however, strong relationships between suicide, traumatic life events and mental illness. Mental health promotion programs such as Act-Belong-Commit contribute to suicide prevention by keeping people mentally healthy, building individual and community resilience and by preventing mental illness.
- Act can include keeping mentally, physically, socially and spiritually active, taking a walk, reading a book and getting creative. To Belong can include joining a club, volunteering, connecting with friends and family and getting involved in your community. While ways to Commit can include taking up a cause, helping a neighbour, finding your passion or learning something new.

### 2016 Mental Health Week Sponsors and Supporters

- Lotterywest
- Black Swan Health
- WA Primary Health Alliance
- MercyCare
- HelpingMinds
- UnitingCare West
- Rise Network
- Mission Australia
- St Bartholomew's House
- Southern Cross Care (WA)
- Neami National
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Anglicare WA
- Perth Theatre Trust
- ECU
- City of Perth

### About WAAMH

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) was incorporated in 1966 and is the peak body representing WA's community-managed mental health sector and around 100 organisational and individual members. Our vision is that as a human right, every one of us who experiences mental health issues has the resources and support needed to recover, lead a good life and contribute as active citizens. WAAMH advocates for effective public policy on mental health issues, delivers workforce training and sector development, and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing. In 2016, WAAMH is celebrating 50 years of developing, promoting and representing the community mental health sector in Western Australia. Further info at [www.waamh.org.au](http://www.waamh.org.au)

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