



MEDIA RELEASE

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Spring into action in October

If you haven't planned anything exciting for October yet, you may want to consider putting some time aside for a jam-packed week of fun during Mental Health Week. As the sunny season of Spring settles in by mid-October, it marks the perfect setting to head outdoors and get along to some of the activities happening near you.

The Western Australian Association of Mental Health, working in partnership with the Mental Health Commission, is coordinating the events and activities during Mental Health Week, running this year from October 6-13.

Some events during this year's celebration will include 'Turn Blue 4 a Day', an art exhibition, poetry competition and an opening ceremony at the Luna Theatre in Leederville. One of the highlights will be the energetic personality and former sports journalist Glenn Mitchell speaking about his personal journey of recovery and the stigma attached to mental illness.

The aim of Mental Health Week is to promote social and emotional wellbeing to the community, encourage people to maximise their health potential, enhance the coping capacity of communities, families and individuals, and increase mental health recovery.

Mental health issues affect more than one in five Australians every year, with anxiety disorders being the most common mental health challenge, followed by depression. Mental Health Week creates an opportunity for people to think about the ways in which we can enhance our social and emotional wellbeing, thereby building our personal resilience and support networks.

WAAMH executive director Rod Astbury said Mental Health Week was a great opportunity to engage all members of the community in activities which can enhance their mental health and wellbeing.

"Mental Health Week is a useful reminder for all of us to think about the mental health of ourselves and those around us," Astbury said. "It's also a good excuse to get out there and have some fun.

"Mental Health Week is a wonderful example of what can be done through strong partnerships as we successfully engaged with our sector, the broader community, and encouraged government and corporate organisations to participate in the promotion of positive mental health messages."

This year's theme is *Celebrate, Connect, Grow* which encourages people to celebrate the positive things in their lives, their strengths and values; connect with others by paying close attention to their relationships; and grow by expanding their horizons and trying something new to create meaning and purpose.

As one of its pre-promotional activities, WAAMH has launched a poster competition to schools asking students to design a poster with a positive mental health message. Winning artwork will be printed on postcards and used during Mental Health Week. Further details on the poster competition can be found at <http://mhw.waamh.org.au/awards--competitions.aspx#competition>



About Mental Health Week

Mental Health Week is funded by the Mental Health Commission and coordinated by the Western Australian Association for Mental Health. Mental Health Week is an annual event and first coordinated by WAAMH more than 15 years ago. The event coincides around World Mental Health Day, which is celebrated annually on October 10. This year, Mental Health Week will run between Sunday, October 6 and Sunday, October 13. The week long festivities will embrace art, music and community to promote awareness about mental health and wellbeing for ourselves and those around us. Further information can be found at <http://mhw.waamh.org.au/>

About WAAMH

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) has been engaged in the mental health sector for more than 50 years. WAAMH is the peak body representing the community-managed mental health sector in WA with more than 100 organisational and individual members. Our vision is to lead the way in supporting and promoting the human rights of people with mental illness and their families and carers, through the provision of inclusive, well-governed community-based services, focused on recovery. WAAMH advocates for effective public policy on mental health issues, delivers workforce training and development, and promotes positive attitudes to mental health and recovery. Further information on WAAMH can be found at <http://www.waamh.org.au>

Executive Director

Rod Astbury
WA Association for Mental Health
08 9420 7277
rastbury@waamh.org.au

Media Contact

Brooke Showers
WA Association for Mental Health
08 9420 7277
bshowers@wamha.org.au



WAAMH - Peak body representing the community-managed mental health sector in WA

A: 2 Delhi Street, West Perth WA 6005 **T:** 08 9420 7277 **F:** 08 9420 7280

E: communications@waamh.org.au **W:** <http://www.waamh.org.au>