

MEDIA RELEASE

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Gold Coast mental health symposium to feature local mental health and crisis care initiatives

The annual Australian Rotary Mental Health Symposium being held on the Gold Coast today (August 19) has never been more timely, with crisis care a feature of the agenda.

Last year's symposium was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with this year's discussion focused on transforming crisis care and building resilience.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic is this year's keynote speaker, with presentations from a range of mental health and suicide prevention services and stakeholders, including Lifeline Australia, Children's Health Queensland, Gold Coast Health, Gold Coast Primary Health Network and primary and community care services.

Themes to be discussed include working in partnership, improved experiences for consumers with alternatives to emergency departments, lived experience involvement in design, delivery and evaluation, innovative services to address the demands we are facing currently, trauma-informed care and suicide prevention.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network CEO, Matt Carrodus, said the symposium is showcasing strategies from the Joint Regional Plan for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and Other Drug Services, launched 12 months ago, which provides a shared understanding of issues, a vision for the future and a strategic roadmap for future service provision.

"The first year of the plan has focused on building the necessary foundations and partnerships including governance arrangements, better communication between services and the system and demonstrating progress against the plan, to improve the quality of care for people requiring support on the Gold Coast," Mr Carrodus said.

Gold Coast Health will be presenting their crisis reform strategy, including ways to transform crisis care to be more responsive, effective, compassionate and connected.

Gold Coast Health's Executive Director for Mental Health and Specialist Services, Malcolm McCann, said the current social landscape has seen more Australians than ever before face mental health challenges.

"The symposium highlights the many mental health initiatives available in the Gold Coast community as local healthcare providers take a compassionate and collaborative approach to delivering mental health, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drugs services in the region," said Mr McCann.

Earlier this month in a Queensland-first, a dedicated Crisis Stabilisation Unit opened at Robina Hospital.

The unit has been designed to divert patients in acute mental health crises away from emergency departments and into a comfortable, therapeutic, and home-like environment to ease their crisis.

Admissions are coordinated through Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Police Service and the hospital's emergency department.

Brian Heaton, from the Runaway Bay Rotary Club, said funds raised for the symposium helped to support the mental health sector.

"The Rotary club of Runaway Bay in conjunction with Australian Rotary Health are proud to have supported mental health initiatives for the past 15 years and in particular this symposium for ten years," he said.

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