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NEWS RELEASE

Push up challenge by health executives on the Gold Coast to raise suicide awareness

While push ups might not be in their role description, a group of Gold Coast health professionals are completing 3318 push-ups over 25 days in June, to highlight the number of people who died from suicide across Australia in 2019.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network CEO, Matt Carrodus, said putting a team together to get involved in the annual PushUp Challenge, raises awareness about suicide and importantly, suicide prevention.

“This is a way for us to highlight the region’s shared leadership and commitment to suicide prevention, as we all have a role to play,” Mr Carrodus said.

“It’s also timely to raise awareness during men’s health week given that of the 278 suicides in the Gold Coast region in 2017-2019, males accounted for 65 per cent of deaths,” Mr Carrodus said.

A multi-sectoral leadership group has been working to develop a Gold Coast Suicide Prevention Community Action Plan, which is currently being finalised, and will support a coordinated response to suicide and the emerging needs brought on by COVID-19.

“One of our initiatives in the Community Action Plan is providing free online Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training, which we encourage local residents to complete, which will help them identify and support their friends, colleagues or customers who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts,” Mr Carrodus said.

Also involved in the PushUp challenge, are health professionals from Lives Lived Well, Gold Coast Health, Wesley Mission Queensland and Krurungal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Welfare, Resources and Housing.

Lives Lived Well CEO Mitchell Giles said, “Each year, headspace Southport and Upper Coomera do important work in support of young people aged 12 – 25 to help them through challenging times. Doing the push-up challenge helps raise awareness of these supports on the Gold Coast as well as other invaluable supports around suicide prevention,” Mr Giles said.

Malcolm McCann, Gold Coast Health Executive Director, Mental Health and Specialist Services, says the challenge is a unique way for executives to highlight mental health and help drive more conversations about suicide prevention.

“Raising awareness about the magnitude of the issue is an important first step,” he said. “But my takeaway message would be if you’re worried about somebody, speak to them,” Mr McCann said.

Mike Anelay, a Support Facilitator from Wesley Mission Queensland said the challenge also promoted the benefits of exercise to boost mental health.

“Fitness is crucial to my mental health. Exercise for me is like pressing the reset button, allowing me to get out of my head for an hour or so. I can then go back to the issue with a fresh perspective. It is also a safe and healthy way to release frustrations,” Mr Anelay said.

Meet the Team

- **Gold Coast Primary Health Network:** Matt Carrodus (CEO), Libby Carr (Director of Commissioning Programs), Kellie Trigger (Planning and Stakeholder Engagement Program Manager)
- **Gold Coast Health:** Malcolm McCann (Executive Director, Mental Health and Specialist Services)
- **Lives Lived Well:** Mitchell Giles (CEO) Emily Hughes (Manager Clinical Services, headspace Gold Coast) Steve Hackett (Clinical Services Manager, Lives Lived Well and Complex Youth Mental Health, headspace Southport)
- **Krurungal:** Alfred Summers (Service Manager)
- **Wesley Mission Queensland:** Mike Anelay, (Support Facilitator)

Suicide Support Services

For a full list of suicide prevention services on the Gold Coast, including details about the QPR training visit: <https://gcphn.org.au/community/suicide-support-services>

Crisis Support

- **Dial Triple Zero (000):** If you or someone you are with is in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to you or others, call Triple Zero (000)
- **Lifeline Australia:** Phone 13 11 14, Web: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/i-m-feeling-suicidal/>
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** Phone:1300 659 467, Web: <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>
- **The Mental Health Access Line:** Phone: 1300 MH (1300 64 2255)
- **Beyond Blue Support Service:** Phone: 1300 22 4636, Web: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
- **Mates in Construction:** Phone: 1300 642 111, Web: <https://mates.org.au/>

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