

MEDIA RELEASE

Mental health community in Port Macquarie and surrounding regions regroup after challenging few years

Monday 30 May 2022: Community-based mental health organisations in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region are seeing increased demand for their services following exposure to the multiple disasters of COVID-19, the widespread bushfires in 2019-2020 and catastrophic floods.

On Tuesday 31 May 2022 Mental Health Coordinating Council, the peak body for non-government community mental health services - with co-hosts - Breakthru and Mid North Coast Local Health District - will hold an important networking event for local mental health service providers.

Frontline community and mental health workers have been invited to attend the event to regroup, share strategies, and create strong networks to support people as the region deals with the ongoing demand for services.

Mental Health Coordinating Council CEO Carmel Tebbutt says the compounding impact of multiple disasters on top of COVID-19 has been one of the most difficult times faced by the mental health sector.

“Demand for mental health services has never been greater, while at the same time restrictions and lockdowns made delivery extremely challenging for many providers,” Ms Tebbutt says.

“The Meet your Neighbour event recognises the work, commitment and resilience of frontline community mental health workers and organisations in and around Port Macquarie and showcases the creativity of the sector to support people in this region to recover.”

Community-based mental health organisations deliver psychosocial support services to people living with mental health conditions.

“Community-based organisations adapt and innovate to respond to conditions on the ground and deliver much needed, targeted services in their local communities,” Ms Tebbutt explains.

“More than ever before, we need to work together, listen to those most affected by the impact of the recent disasters and respond with practical, sustainable support.”

The event will include a session titled, **‘The experience of resilient organisations during floods, fires and COVID-19’**.

Speakers include Solange Villagran from the Getting on Track in Time (Got It!), Perinatal, Child and Youth Mental Health Programs, Adam Ulrick from Disaster Recovery Integrated Mental Health, Lived Experience Collaborator Emma Norton, and representatives from local community mental health providers, Neami National and New Horizons.

Media are welcome to attend. To request an interview with Carmel Tebbutt, contact Lara Cole on lara.c@mhcc.org.au or 0421 202 643