

# MCT MATTERS

004

STAY INFORMED - STAY CONNECTED - STAY ACTIVE

JUNE 19

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## BRAVE SHOW

**M**en Care Too is proud to announce that we will be producing the inaugural **'This Is My Brave'** mental health storytelling show on the Central Coast during Mental Health Month in October.

**This Is My Brave Australia** shows, aim to break the stigma and stereotypes surrounding mental health challenges through storytelling, poetry, song, dance and creative expression live on stage.

One in four Australians live with a mental health challenge and most of us have family or friends who are affected. Talking about the way people live with, through and beyond a mental health challenge can be the most powerful way to support and encourage others.

Storytelling Saves Lives.

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## TOUGH WORK

With support from the **Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network**, Men Care Too hosted the 'Tough Work' forum to strike up a local conversation about men's health.

**T**o mark Men's Health Week on the NSW Central Coast, Men Care Too hosted a forum for local health, social and community workers and volunteers to connect with each other, learn about local initiatives and discuss strategies to better support the priority populations identified in the National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030.

We started the forum by talking about some men's health facts from the Australian Men's Health Forum; 1 in 3 men die of cancer, 93% of workplace deaths are male, 3 in 4 road deaths are men and what is a highly motivating force behind many people working with men - 3 out of every 4 suicides are men.

There is no one solution to the complexity of issues behind male suicide rates, the numbers are similar around the world and affects people from all walks of life including, young, working

age and elderly men. What we can do is talk about it, encourage and support grassroots initiatives and programs that give men a space to connect and provide a safe outlet to acknowledge and work on their challenges.

Men Care Too challenges each and every service provider or community organisation in Australia to ensure some aspects of your work are male friendly to give those men at risk of suicide a chance at life.

The forum kicked off with Central Coast Primary Care Family Wellbeing Program Co-Ordinator Nigel who spoke about a program designed by Aboriginal Elders which has been delivered to more than 350 local indigenous youth. Over the past 6 years the program has provided an opportunity to discuss and educate on topics such as physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs.

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# THIS IS MY BRAVE AUSTRALIA, CENTRAL COAST SHOW

**T**his Is My Brave Australia is a leading platform and community for people to share their stories of living with a mental health challenge in an effort to break the stigma and stereotypes often associated with talking about mental health challenges. They do this through a flagship production "This Is My Brave Australia - The Show" which features regular people from the community who have auditioned to be cast in the show. They share true stories live on stage

through personal essay, poetry, comedy and original music.

This Is My Brave held an inaugural show in 2014 in the US to a sold out crowd of 400. Since then they have expanded rapidly across the US with multiple shows in different states around the country.

This Is My Brave Australia kicked off in Canberra with a sold out show in 2017 and has gained momentum with a numbers of regional shows, film festivals and events

around the country.

The show is produced 100% by local volunteers and all monies raised will be directed into suicide prevention and mental health education to provide members of our community with the skills, knowledge and confidence to help others.

Auditions will be held in late July with cast rehearsals to follow before our show on Sunday October 20th. Enquiries: [mybravecentralcoast@gmail.com](mailto:mybravecentralcoast@gmail.com) or mobile 0400 604 231



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# TOUGH WORK

**N**ext up was Brennan from All In Gaming, a new local initiative aimed at creating much needed connections between youth through the shared experience and interest in video games. Running after school at a local community centre the initiative aims to reduce the feelings of isolation and loneliness that many youth experience by creating a space for real life interactions.

Fathers were next on the agenda with Vicki from Uniting talking about 'Becoming a Father, Being a Dad'. Growing from feedback about lack of recognition and services for new Dads, a 'Dad's Night Out' midweek event was held with NRL Legend Nathan Hindmarsh as guest speaker along with other local men talking about the challenges and highlights of being a dad.

Employment is often seen as a

major contributor to men's sense of belonging and worth in society and for men who live with an illness or disability the barriers and challenges to employment can have a huge impact on their wellbeing. Mark from Disability Employment Service provider APM, spoke about the process of not just working with clients to gain employment, but to empower individuals through respect and encouragement.

Following a morning tea break, attendees began the 'Tough Work' of coming up with strategies to connect with, and support men in specific demographics. After some time for collaboration with other groups, each of the tables shared their ideas and initiatives with some great potential coming out of such a short time frame.

We ended the forum by focusing back on the men in our

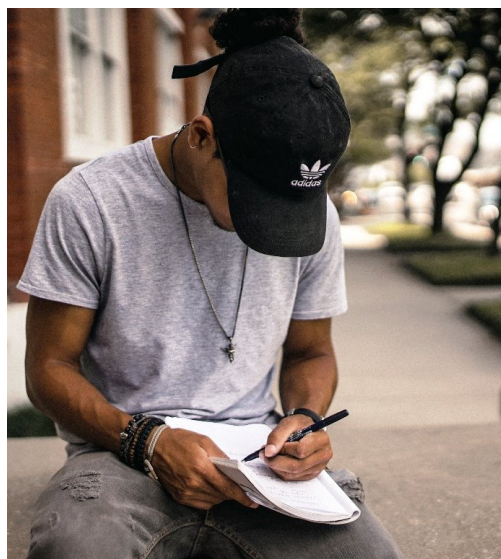
community who are socially isolated, experiencing any sort of loss, struggling financially or living with physical or mental health challenges. Men may do things a little differently to women, but at the end of the day we are all human and have an innate need for connection, worth and purpose. We are all capable of doing something that can make a difference in the lives of others - Start a conversation by asking your boss, colleague, brother or mate the question "What does a male friendly initiative look like to you?"

Men Care Too would like to extend our thanks to Hunter New England, Central Coast Primary Health Network for sponsoring the 'Tough Work' Forum. We would also like to thank the Mingara Club for support with a Club Grant which along with support from Lakes Printers helped to keep our costs down.



# BEST REGARDS

When was the last time you sent or received a hand written thank you note?



**T**echnology plays such a large role in our lives and a heartfelt thank you is often not given as much attention as it once was. To write a thank you note is a sign of respect and sincerity that offers the recipient something to hold and touch, much more valuable than a like or a share on Facebook.

Taking the time to write someone a note is not only going to bring a smile to their face, it will likely be something that gives you a good feeling. Writing is widely used as a tool to help express thoughts and emotions that can often be hard to put into words.

An article from The Art Of Manliness website includes the following tips for when and how to write a thank you note;

It is a good idea to send someone a note if they have given you a gift, goes above and beyond what is expected or does something that impresses you. There is never a wrong time to write a

thank you note so if you feel like writing one - go for it!

Ground rules include writing the note as soon as possible after the event, sending it through the post and using real stationary not simply a store bought card.

As pointed out in the original article, following these steps will show the recipient that you made an effort and appreciate what they have done for you.

One thank you note that Men Care Too would encourage you to consider writing is to yourself.

It might sound silly and even feel a bit odd doing it, but taking the time to stop and consider all the things you do for yourself and others can be a good exercise to remind yourself of what you offer to the people in your life.

If you find writing yourself a thank you note a positive experience you could try keeping a journal of thoughts and any activities that mean something to you. That opportunity to express your thoughts through words that perhaps no one else will see is for many a great way to deal with the good and bad days.

Next time you receive a gift or someone does something nice for you, get some paper and a pen and let them know.

Thanking the people in your life who make it better is a great way to stay connected.



## CUT TO THE POINT

### EYE CARE

Did you know that 1 in 7 Australians over the age of 50 have some evidence of age-related macular degeneration?

Early stages of the disease typically have no impact on vision but like any changes you notice with your health, it's important to see a health professional early.

If someone you care for has low vision there are a number of things to consider that can help you better support them and keep yourself well.

**MACULA HELP: 1800 111 709**

### SERVICE CHANGES

The Australian Government is rolling out a range of new early intervention services and supports for carers from July 2019.

Aimed at increasing carer skills and to reduce the strain of caring the new services include peer support (online and in person), self guided coaching, phone based counselling and practical skills courses along with help to plan ahead and financial support packages.

More detailed information is available at [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au)

**CARER GATEWAY: 1800422737**

# TOPIC TUESDAY

SANE Australia recently hosted an online forum to discuss men in caring roles, a chance for men and women to talk about challenges for blokes who care.



**S**ANE Australia is a national mental health charity working to support the estimated four million Australians affected by complex mental illness along with the people who support them.

One of the ways they do this is through anonymous online forums where real people with real experience can speak with each other about those topics that can be hard to talk about with mates, colleagues or family.

In June the 'Topic Tuesday' forum was focused on being a male in a caring role and cov-

ered a wide range of topics which included talking with others, maintaining your own identity, awareness of specific demographics of male carers and taking a break for your own well being.

One of our favorite tips during the forum came from user name 'JMRD' who said that caring for someone is 'not a DIY project' We agree, it's better to find support and accept a hand when it is offered rather than try to do everything on your own.

Thank you **SANE Australia** for recognising men who care.

## KEY DATES IN 2019 ...

**JUL 7-14** | NAIDOC Week

**SEP 1** | Fathers Day

**SEP** | Prostate Cancer Month

**SEP 10** | Suicide Prevention Day

**SEP 10-12** | Men's Shed Gathering

**SEP 12** | RUOK? Day

**OCT 5-11** | Mental Health Week

**OCT 13-19** | Carers Week

**NOV 19** | International Men's Day



"THE ONLY THING YOU CAN CONTROL IS THE THOUGHT YOU ARE HAVING RIGHT NOW.

MAKE IT CALM, CLEAR AND SIMPLE. MAKE IT YOUR SUPERPOWER." - *Maxime Lagacé*



**NSW Central Coast LHD Carer Support Unit** - 43 205556 (9am-4.30pm, Mon-Fri)

**MensLine Australia** - 1300 78 99 78 (24/7)

**Lifeline** - 13 11 14 (24/7)

**Carer Gateway** - 1800 422 737 (8am-6pm, Mon-Fri)

**National Carerline** - 1800 242 636 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)

**QLife (GBTI)** - 1800 184 527 (3pm-12am 7 days)

**Suicide Call Back Service** - 1300 659 467 (24/7)

**Open Arms (Veterans and Families)** - 1800 011 046 (24/7)

**GriefLine** - 1300 845 745 (midday to 3am)



Visit [www.mencaretoo.org](http://www.mencaretoo.org) for more information

All photos from **MCT** and [www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com)

**Men Care Too** is proudly funded by **The Elderslee Foundation**  
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Proudly distributed to the Central Coast community through the support of