

# MCT MATTERS

006

STAY INFORMED - STAY CONNECTED - STAY ACTIVE

MAR 20

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## WAITING AROUND

When was the last time you had to sit in a waiting room, hospital ward or by the phone waiting for news that could potentially change everything in an instant?

Watching someone you love and care about undergo scans, blood tests or any other type of medical exam can be a difficult and helpless experience which can get even tougher whilst awaiting the results.

It can be hard to keep your mind from jumping to a worst case scenario and along with your own thoughts and worry is the responsibility you can feel as a carer to help allay the fears and concerns of the person you love and care for.

Waiting around is tough, you feel useless but there are some ways to reduce the stress of uncertainty.

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## MEMORABLE YEAR

With 2020 well underway and full of new possibilities Men Care Too wanted to take a minute and reflect on just how memorable and busy the past year was.

Throughout the year we had information stalls and spoke at a variety of different community events, participated in online forums and continued to host monthly Mr Perfect BBQ's at The Entrance.

Being involved and active in the community created opportunities to highlight the number of men in unpaid caring roles and the challenges faced, encouraging blokes to be more proactive with their own health needs and to keep an eye on their mates.

Kicking off in January with a trip to the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground, our group enjoyed a behind the scenes tour taking in the history and spectacular views. This was a great day out and a wonderful way to start the year.

In partnership with Danny and Laura at Hearts and Minds Barber Emporium Toukley, February marked the beginning of the 'Barbershop Talks' where throughout the year guest speakers

shared personal stories and strategies for how to cope when life gets difficult. Well attended, these nights were intended as a chance to speak openly about mental health, and proved to be far more important than we could ever have imagined.

Also in February, Men Care Too was provided an opportunity to fundraise during the Over The Line Race Day at Wyong Race Club. We sold plenty of raffle tickets and received some generous donations from racegoers which was matched dollar for dollar by Wyong Race Club.

Invited to join the Well Man tour, Men Care Too headed north to take part in a series of community events held in Mackay, Cairns and Townsville. The chance to share the MCT story and messages in new communities is always appreciated and welcome.

In June Men Care Too hosted the ....

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# WAITING AROUND

One of the best things you can do whilst waiting around if possible is to keep busy with things you would normally do.

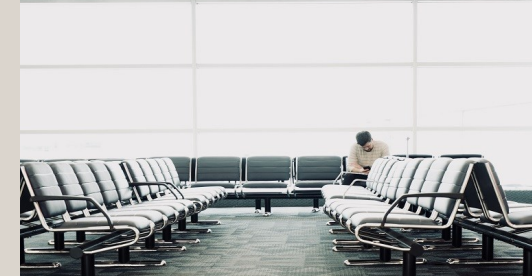
The mundane yet familiar tasks such as shopping and housework can give you a sense of comfort. It may be hard to stick to your normal routine if you're travelling back and forth to Doctors offices or Hospital wards but sticking somewhat to your regular eating and sleeping times can also help.

Taking some time to learn more about what tests are be-

ing done or possible outcomes can help you feel better prepared and somewhat on top of things yet with many sources of information online it can be easy to become misled or follow the wrong advice.

Medically, it's best to direct any questions to your doctor or support staff. The internet can be your best friend or worst enemy during difficult times, know which one it is for you and either switch off or tread carefully.

One great advantage of the



online world is the connection to family and mates when you can't physically be in the same place and whilst a virtual catch up is not the same as in person it still provides a connection and outlet for any concerns you may have.

Something is better than nothing so don't just sit around staring at the walls it only gives your imagination a chance to take over, have a think about and make a to do list for the next time you're playing the waiting game.

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# MEMORABLE YEAR

'Tough Work' Men's Health Week Forum for health professionals and service providers at Mingara Club. Funded by the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network, attendees got together to hear about local, male friendly initiatives and spend time working together to develop ideas and strategies on how to increase engagement with services by local men.

An RUOK? Day small grant from Suicide Prevention Central Coast, seen Men Care Too turn yellow on September 12 to share conversations and giveaways with local businesses and community groups.

Carers Week in October was spent with a group of local carers learning how to respond to an emergency in the home and provide First Aid if needed. Training was provided free to carers by Central Coast Council and lunch taken care of by the

Erina Men's Shed. Knowing how to assess and respond calmly in an emergency is invaluable and could save a life, Men Care Too encourage everyone to take part in First Aid training.

In what was an amazing year, perhaps the event which held the most meaning on a number of levels was This Is My Brave Australia Central Coast Show (TIMBACC). A highlight working on the show was meeting our cast members, witnessing their trust in our production team and then watching as they grew in confidence over the three months we spent together.

A huge positive from the TIMBACC production was the opportunity for Men Care Too to provide Mental Health First Aid Training to local community members with the funds raised during the production. Delivered by Ben Higgs from Rise

Foundation Australia, 18 Central Coast locals took part in the training and now have the knowledge, skills and confidence to help someone experiencing a mental health challenge.

Much of the work mentioned here was made possible thanks to funding from The Elderslee Foundation, we are grateful for their support and encouragement along with the administrative support and guidance from our Auspicing body The Iris Foundation.

Last but by no means least, what drives our activities and events are the people who attend and get involved. Either online or in person, the people who we connect with are what continues to motivate and inspire Men Care Too - Thank you to everyone who has been part of that and we look forward to the possibilities that lie ahead in 2020.

# SPENDING TIME

Time will tick by no matter what you're doing so be proactive and make it count.



**Y**ou may have heard of the Magical Bank metaphor, where \$86,400 is credited to your bank account each day, the only rules being that what you don't spend can't be saved for a rainy day and the bank can close the account at anytime without warning. The Magical Bank is a way of looking at the time we have to use each day, 86,400 seconds to spend as you like, even less if you're lucky enough to get a good nights sleep.

It seems like a big number, much more valuable than money in the bank and yet it can be easy to let it pass by without making it count.

Defining a focus, purpose and a sense of value in how you spend your time can help make better use of those valuable seconds, start by asking yourself a simple question.

What are you looking forward to this year?

Having plans for the future, something to look forward to over the next 3, 6 and 12

months can be a great way to break up the year and give you projects to work on around the home or in the community which may also serve as a welcome distraction from other things that are happening in your life.

If you are in a caring role or have found yourself a bit out of tune with work, relationships or purpose, one thing that can help is finding something to shift the focus of your attention even just for a few hours or days each fortnight. Most of us can make a list of odd jobs that need doing around the home, working through a smaller list short term could lead to starting on a bigger project that once completed offers a sense of achievement and the motivation can then flow through to other areas of life where it's needed.

For anyone who can make the time, getting involved in community work like volunteering with a local service or organisation provides a chance to connect with others, learn new skills and make a difference for the people in need where you live.

It may take a little bit of searching on your part to find the right fit for you, but there are always plenty of opportunities to volunteer on a regular basis or at special events.

Always remember that time will tick by no matter what you're doing so be proactive, define a purpose for your daily credits and make them count.



## CUT TO THE POINT

### BE READY

The new year offers a chance to take a fresh look at our lives and make changes where needed. It is also a good time to check that personal and financial accounts including wills are all up to date.

An often overlooked but important piece of paper to have prepared at any age is an **Advanced Care Plan**.

Make sure your preferences and beliefs are known so that if life takes a turn, any decisions your family need to make will be a little easier.

**ADVICE:** 1800 208 582

### KNOW ASBESTOS

Did you know that at least 1 in 3 Australian homes are likely to contain asbestos?

Don't play **renovation roulette** is the important message from the Asbestos Education Committee who encourage anyone attempting home renovations to stop and complete a safety check prior to starting to better understand how to manage asbestos around the home.

Whilst asbestos is a serious issue, with the right checks and assistance from a licensed assessor it can be taken care of safely.

**INFO:** 1300 272 378



# START PLANNING

Big or small, events and programs aimed at men have the potential to save lives and give men looking for support and direction a better future.



**M**en Care Too are calling on organisations, service providers and community groups in Australia to mark their calendars and start planning male friendly events which will encourage blokes to learn about, and connect with their local services and supports.

The most prominent dates for male specific events to work towards are Men's Health Week (June 15th-21st), Fathers Day on September 6th, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month during September, Movember and International

Men's Day (November 19th).

Opportunities exist throughout the year to engage with men in the community through health awareness days and months by looking at the experience of men either with a condition/disability or those blokes who care for someone living with an illness or disability.

Your organisation or group could also get creative and consider hosting an activity to coincide with a significant sporting event such as the NRL State Of Origin, Super-cars or AFL Grand Final.

## KEY DATES IN 2020 ...

**MAY 18-24** | Volunteer Week

**JUN 15-21** | Men's Health Week

**JULY 5-12** | NAIDOC Week

**SEP 6** | Fathers Day

**SEP 10** | Suicide Prevention Day

**SEP 12** | RUOK? Day

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

**OCT 11-17** | Carers Week

**OCT 28** | Blue Knot Day

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



**WHATEVER YOUR GOALS, YOU AREN'T GOING TO FIND THE ANSWERS LOOKING**

**TO OTHERS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN, IT HAS TO COME FROM WITHIN.**



**- Mick Fanning**

**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 auspiced by **The Iris Foundation**

