

# MCT MATTERS

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STAY INFORMED - STAY CONNECTED - STAY ACTIVE

DEC 18

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A Busy Year

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'Perfect' Mates



## MEN'S DAY YARN UP

Listening to a man speak about his football coach, business mentor, work colleague or teacher, someone they looked up to and respected, many would expect to hear compelling insights about tactics to beat the opposition or perhaps strategies to improve sales.

These stories are there of course, but what came to mind first for the men during the International Men's Day Yarn Up at The Glen were the life lessons their role models had shared with them. The lessons were about how to treat others or how to respect someone with a different perspective and important lessons about how to learn from your mistakes.

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## 2018 ... TIME WELL SPENT

So much can happen in the space of 12 months and in 2018 Men Care Too had a number of great opportunities to learn, grow and work alongside others in a variety of ways.

In February MCT worked with Carer Escapes to deliver the first of two 'Men's Day Out' events held at Glenworth Valley on the NSW Central Coast.

Men of different ages and backgrounds were invited to take part in Kayaking and Drumming activities along with enjoying a BBQ lunch and informal discussions about the caring role. The event made possible thanks to sponsorship from The Iris Foundation and participation from the carers who came along on the day.

A second Men's Day Out in June, this time sponsored by Your Side, proved just as popular with attendees and highlighted the benefits of social activities as a way to encourage men in caring roles to take a much needed and well deserved break from their regular responsibilities.

In April MCT again partnered with The Iris Foundation to host a screening of 'The Ripple Effect', a thought provoking film that looks at the impact of suicide and attempted suicide on family and community. Held at Tuggerah, the screening was

attended by over 100 locals and included powerful, personal reflection from community members who, in finding ways to manage their own challenges, have made a huge difference in the lives of others.

Topics such as suicide, and mental health can be difficult to discuss but given the physical and financial stress of caring along with the isolation and lack of meaningful support that many carers experience, these topics need to be talked about openly and Men Care Too will continue to advocate for all carers on these issues.

In April, MCT joined the Hunter New England Men's Health Network and has attended monthly meetings where strategies to increase awareness of men's health issues are discussed. These meetings, along with the Central Coast Men's Interagency Meetings provide MCT with an opportunity to have the perspective and experience of men in caring roles included, and considered, in discussions.

June was the Men's Health Week, 'Men

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# INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY 'YARN UP'

**M**ore than 200 community members were part of the day held at Chittaway Point on the NSW Central Coast.

Attendees were treated to a BBQ lunch and took part in a cleansing smoking ceremony followed by a celebratory welcome dance which was performed by The Glen dancers to welcome everyone to the yarn up.

Over the next couple of hours, men from all different walks of life spoke from the heart about their own challenges, triumphs and inspiration to be good men and better role models for their family and community. The speakers were successful businessmen, sporting legends and community leaders along with men who had been through The Glen's program - working hard every day to stay clean

and sober, living a life that would not have been possible without the healing support of The Glen.

Listening to these men speak was inspiring. There was no bravado, no ego and no need to impress anyone, each of the men shared a little of themselves, their fears and their struggles. It was real talk and something men need the opportunity to do more often.



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# 2018 ... TIME WELL SPENT

... 'Men Cook Too' event held at Erina in collaboration with Central Coast Local Health District and Wesley Sector and Support.

During the first half of the event, The Wholesome Collective presented a live cooking demonstration providing tips on quick and healthy meal options for any size family. The second half of the event welcomed 3 time Australian Heavyweight Boxing Champion Bob 'Big Bear' Mirovic along with Former Australian, NSW and Western Suburbs Rugby League great Don Parish. RUOK? Day Central Coast Ambassador Chris Newman joined the men on stage and discussed highlights of their careers and talked about the challenges they faced in and out of their sporting lives.

In July MCT, with support from The Glen Rehab Centre at Chittaway Point, attended the Suicide Prevention Australia Conference in Adelaide where a poster presentation was shared with over 600 delegates. The poster highlighted some of the challenges male car-

ers face and called for more male friendly services and support.

Tradies Month in August was a good chance for MCT to highlight that many men with caring responsibilities are employed and feel pressures to provide and look after their families. Employers across all industries need to promote greater flexibility in roles to encourage workers with caring responsibilities to maintain employment where possible.

Still in August, The Mental Health Services Conference was held in Adelaide and thanks to a bursary from the event organisers, MCT was able to attend the 3 day event. The opportunity to present a snapshot of Men Care Too during a session based on personal stories was greatly appreciated and with over 50 people in attendance the topic of men in caring roles was again reaching more people.

In October, the Carers NSW conference provided MCT with a chance to share some key statis-

tics on male carers insights into the work of Men Care Too with organisations and people working within the carer support sector in NSW. We also celebrated National Carers Week with a private tour of The Art House and lunch followed the next day by an open community event at Erina Men's Shed.

It has been great to be involved in many other events and activities throughout the year and planning for 'time well spent' in 2019 is already well underway!





# WELCOME SUPPORT FOR MEN CARE TOO

October was a special time for MCT with local organisations **The Elderslee Foundation** and **The Iris Foundation** getting behind **Men Care Too**.



**D**uring National Carers Week in October, Men Care Too (MCT) was excited to announce The Iris Foundation would be auspicing MCT projects and in a further boost MCT was successful with an application for funding from The Elderslee Foundation to continue work on initiatives that aim to reduce isolation and loneliness for men in unpaid, informal caring roles.

Over the past 12 months Men Care Too (MCT) has operated as a self-funded and volunteer run, grass roots community project advocating for men who are now providing, or have previously provided care and support to a family member or friend with an illness, disability or age related condition.

Through in person and online activities, MCT aims to raise awareness and educate community and social service providers about the

impact that a caring role has on physical and mental health from a male perspective.

Sue Liptrott from The Iris Foundation said *"Iris Foundation is very proud to support Men Care Too, a project initiated by Greg Smith who has spent the last 12 months tirelessly raising awareness and developing connections to reduce isolation experienced by male carers in unpaid roles."*

Having developed strong local ties through aged care and community focused initiatives, The Elderslee Foundation already provide funding to a number of Central Coast projects including 'Behind The Seen' whose work provides mental health awareness and workshops for emergency services personnel.

Elderslee Foundation board member Ruth Jordon said that *"The Elderslee Foundation is pleased to support Men Care Too with a seeding grant, which we hope will assist the organisation in its promotional activities and position it to take advantage of funding opportunities which may arise. Our donation recognises the much needed work to raise issues which affect male carers, and to provide information and support to this often overlooked group in our community."*

MCT are excited and grateful for support of both The Iris Foundation and The Elderslee Foundation



## CUT TO THE POINT

### MCT AT THE SCG

Thanks to funding from the Elderslee Foundation, MCT have organised a guided tour of the SCG at Moore Park Sydney on Friday January 18 for men in caring roles to take a break and enjoy a day out with other blokes who can relate to the highs and lows of caring.

Tour and Lunch provided.

Meeting at 9:30am, make your own way to the ground for the 10am tour followed by lunch at the members lawn kiosk.

Limited tickets available, bookings essential, more info 0400 604 231

### SHORT AND SHARP

Over time it is not uncommon to lose touch with your mates. We all have different things going on and whilst it is good to keep in regular contact, sometimes that just doesn't happen and finding new mates can be tough.

Have you thought about volunteering a couple of hours of your time once every now and then?

It can be a great way to meet new people and share your valuable skills and experience with the community you live in.

Volunteering Australia have offices around Australia, for more info (02) 6251 4060

# 'PERFECT' MATES

Sometimes a weight that has been heavy on your shoulders is lightened by standing around the BBQ with a good bunch of blokes and talking about life.

Mr Perfect is a grassroots, charity that encourages 'conversation and connection in a supportive and inclusive environment' - often the BBQ at your local park. Giving men the opportunity to meet at a place where they feel comfortable and free to talk about topics relevant to them is something that Mr Perfect has provided with monthly meet up's at locations up and down the east coast of Australia.

Men Care Too are proud to facilitate a Mr Perfect BBQ at The Entrance each month, giving local blokes the chance

to share a feed and talk about the good, bad and in between of life.

From two men in a coffee shop on a rainy July day, the Central Coast meet up now averages 10-15 men each time. All different ages and backgrounds, each with some wisdom and experience that makes for interesting conversations, plenty of laughs and understanding of the difficult times we can all go through.

Mr Perfect is a fantastic initiative that MCT are excited to continue working with in 2019



## KEY DATES IN 2019 ...

**JUN 10-16** | Men's Health Week

**JUL 7-14** | NAIDOC Week

**SEP 1** | Fathers Day

**SEP** | Prostate Cancer Month

**SEP 10** | Suicide Prevention Day

**SEP** | Men's Shed Week

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

**OCT 13-19** | Carers Week

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



**LIFE IS HARD. IF YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE IN ANY WAY, THAT'S COOL. - BILL MURRAY.**



**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)**



ELDERSLEE FOUNDATION



**Men Care Too** is proudly funded by **The Elderslee Foundation** and auspiced by **The Iris Foundation**

