

Media statement

19 February 2016

Oakey seeks to THRIVE on friendships

A Darling Downs social initiative will receive \$45,100 from the Queensland Mental Health Commission to encourage friendships and community connections for people living with mental health issues.

Toowoomba Clubhouse will use the funds to extend its THRIVE initiative into Oakey, matching 15 community volunteers with 15 local residents socially isolated by mental illness to share activities and pastimes together.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck said a clear benefit could be seen in bringing THRIVE to Oakey.

“Participants in the THRIVE program in Toowoomba have reported improved quality of life and personal well-being, greater community connections, reduced stigmatisation and more hope among participants for recovery,” Dr van Schoubroeck said.

“We are confident that similar outcomes will flow through to the Oakey community. People need to feel part of the community and have something meaningful to do.”

Toowoomba Clubhouse executive director Luke Terry said THRIVE would operate through Oakey House, an association of community members striving for better mental health.

“We know daytime activities, company and employment or volunteer work are desperately needed in the Oakey area and that these lifestyle needs become an even greater challenge for many people when they are also dealing with mental ill health,” Mr Terry said.

“THRIVE companions are introduced based on shared interests. Our trained and supported community volunteers will be matched with self-selected Oakey House members and they’ll spend time, as friends do, enjoying activities together, or simply sharing a cup of coffee.”

Dr van Schoubroeck said the Commission had distributed more than \$400,000 in 2015-16 as part of its *Stronger Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program* to help improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders while minimising the impact of drug, alcohol and substance misuse in communities.

For further information on THRIVE delivered by Toowoomba Clubhouse, phone (07) 4632 4688.

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