



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.**

**In this edition we are delighted to report the successful launch of the Peel 3 Tier Youth Mental Health Program.** 2015 will be the first full year of the program which aims to break down the barriers and stigmas around mental health in our youth, promote discussion, encourage help seeking behaviours and provide individual treatment and support to those in need. Tier one was funded by a grant from the Western Australian Suicide Prevention Strategy and tiers two and three will be funded by the new Mandurah based charity STEP. Thanks to generous donations from Meeting for Minds and Mr John & Mrs Bella Perry, the program will be formally evaluated. We hope the evaluation will demonstrate the value of this important program and enable us to attract funding for ongoing service delivery in Peel in addition to providing evidence that our program

model is relevant for service provision throughout the State. See the article on page 2 for more information.

Sadly Southern Forests Health, the General Practice operated by GP down south in Manjimup, closed on 31 March 2015. The decision to close the Practice was made by the Board primarily due to financial considerations. It was a difficult decision and we sincerely regret the impact of the closure on the patients who have used the services at Southern Forests Health as well as our employed doctors, the Practice staff and the wider community of Manjimup.

GP down south is a not for profit, charitable organisation. We opened Southern Forests Health in February 2013 to address a shortfall of General Practitioners in the Manjimup area, with community members reporting long waits to access GP services. We have successfully operated the Practice for two years at significant financial cost to our organisation.

We have done everything we can to keep the Practice open including promotion to increase patient numbers and looking for a new owner, but we have been unable to reach a positive outcome. We have been negotiating

with local GPs for several weeks and proposed to transfer ownership and management of the Practice to one of the local doctors. Unfortunately, these talks concluded in mid-March with the doctors deciding not to proceed. We have been in contact with WA Country Health Services SW, the Shire of Manjimup and the SW Development Commission regarding the closure, but unfortunately they are unable to offer assistance that would make the Practice viable.

On a brighter note, we continue to deliver Aboriginal Health Services, Mental Health Services, Community Child Health Services, the Peel Youth Medical Service, the Peel Mobile Health Service, the Activity Assistants program and the WA General Practice Education and Training program. We await the announcement of the Primary Health Networks with interest and look forward to working with them to provide much needed services in our regions.

Amanda Poller

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# 3 TIER YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM



## Successful Launch of Youth Mental Health Program

On the 18th March almost 1000 Year 11 students from 9 local secondary schools gathered at Lakes Theatre, Lakelands to participate in a presentation by Heath Black (Youth Mental Health Ambassador).

Heath discussed the importance of physical and mental wellbeing, discussing his own personal experiences with mental illness. The session was incredibly powerful and moving, creating overwhelming responses by students during the question and answer session at the end of the presentation. The session was supported by clinical staff from Peel Youth Medical Service, Palmerston Association and Peel Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.

The presentation formed Tier 1 (awareness raising) of the 3 Tier Youth Mental Health Program.

The Tier 2 (prevention) workshops will be held in participating schools in early May and will involve Heath visiting the school and presenting to between 30-50 students in a more informal setting on a range of topics that may include: drugs & alcohol, mental health issues, body image, stress & coping strategies, self-harm or suicide. The workshops aim to focus on prevention strategies and help seeking behaviours. They will be supported by staff from



**P Y M S**

PEEL YOUTH MEDICAL SERVICE

Peel Youth Medical Service (PYMS) and external clinicians specialising in the workshop topic to ensure that correct information, support and referral pathways are provided to students.



**STEP**

minds | lives | community



Left:  
Youth Ambassador Heath Black speaks to a packed house of almost 1,000 local secondary students.



Below:  
PYMS staff promote free medical services for local youth.

Left:  
Highly respected member of the local Noongar community, George Walley opens the presentation with Welcome to Country and didgeridoo.

## Charity's first STEP

■ Hayley Goddard

A charity was launched in Mandurah last week with a promise to tackle the health issues affecting the region.

Paul Turnor and Dave Schmacher formed STEP with a vision to better connect the region's charities to tackle issues such as mental health and healthy eating. This year, the organisation funded the second and third tiers of GP Down South's Youth Mental Health Education Program for three years through its partnership with Peel Youth Medical Service.

GPDS business development manager Eleanor Britton said the three-tier program included an awareness presentation, preventative school workshops and individual counselling sessions to tackle the alarming statistic that 38 per cent of PYMS's patients had mental health concerns. Last week, STEP patron and former Fremantle Dockers player Heath Black conducted the awareness presentation in front of 1100 Year 11 students, explaining how he battles bipolar and ADHA issues on a daily basis.

He shared how at the peak of his football career he let his mental health deteriorate and fell into a spiral of alcoholism and crime, which cost him his job.

Black said his issues led to living on the streets until he realised he needed help to improve his mental health.

After a few years of working with doctors, he now feels in control and wants to help others, hence accepting the patron role with STEP.

He encouraged students to ask their friends how they were feeling and for people to be honest if they were having trouble.



Source: The Sound Telegraph (Wednesday 25th March 2015)

# PEEL YOUTH MEDICAL SERVICE (PYMS)



## GP Registrars Join the PYMS Team

**2015 has seen the Peel Youth Medical Service (PYMS) become accredited with WAGPET and proud to announce the arrival of two registrars who commenced in January.**

The positions have been made available by offering the registrars – Dr Laura Begley and Dr Jerome Liew- a joint placement with Modern Medical Centre in Mandurah.

Each registrar spends one day a week at PYMS and the remainder of their time at Modern Medical. The joint arrangement is working well as it would be difficult to attract a registrar to work totally at PYMS due to the high mental health case load – as one of the registrars said “One day is great experience in this area but a week would be very draining”

Dr Simone Stubbs the PYMS Clinical Director and WAGPET Supervisor said “We are very lucky as both registrars have fit in really well because they are good team players. The increased appointment capacity is extremely useful because the young people don’t need to wait as long for appointments and the registrars are very well received by them.”

We hope this will be the first of many WAGPET placements and that through this program we can also attract some of the registrars to provide ongoing sessions at PYMS.



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## NICKY WINMAR FOOTBALL CARNIVAL

**On the 1st March Peel Mobile Health Service (PMHS) partnered with staff from Nidjalla Waangan Mia (NWM) and Palmerston Association (drug and alcohol service) to promote health and wellbeing during the Nicky Winmar Football Carnival.**

This is one of the largest sporting events in the Aboriginal calendar with teams from all over the State participating. Over 200 people engaged with staff many asking questions, taking leaflets, information and resources about our services and facilities. A fruit basket provided by Palmerston was well received and a great way to engage with the young people present and promote healthy eating.





## CLOSING THE GAP DAY – COLLIE

The Peel Mobile Health Service (PMHS) visited Collie on 19th March to support and participate in an event for Closing the Gap.

13 community members benefitted from having a health check carried out by Aboriginal Health Workers.

The health check offered clinical assessment of blood pressure, height, weight, body mass index and blood sugar.

Over 50 people spoke to staff, taking information, leaflets and resources promoting health and wellbeing.

GPds staff enjoyed the networking in the beautiful environment at Collie.



## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



**New service:** Kim Wilkinson from Nidjalla Waangan Mia, GP down south program coordinator Gail Frater and The Compassionate Friends manager Margot McAllister who will be providing her service in Waroona.

### Compassion comes to town with new service

Andrew King

WAROONA residents will be able to access the services of The Compassionate Friends more easily from February 11.

The grief support organisation will operate from the Peel Mobile Health Service van on Wednesday from 10am-noon at the Waroona Community Resource Centre.

The service offers free support for people of any age grieving the death of a child, grandchild or sibling to any cause or a relative, spouse or friend to suicide.

The Compassionate Friends manager Margot McAllister said they were pleased to be offered the opportunity, which the agency hoped would become a regular feature.

"It's difficult for some people to get to Mandurah from Waroona and there are

a lot of people who grieve in Waroona," she said.

Mrs McAllister said on top of the training the people who provided the service receive, they are also all bereaved parents or grandparents.

"You never expect a child to pass," she said. "It can be a very isolating experience even in a close community; it can be easier to talk to someone away from it as everyone in the family is grieving and in different way."

GP down south program coordinator Gail Frater said she met Mrs McAllister at a Waroona inter-agency meeting and was always looking for opportunities to benefit the community.

"We wanted to fill gaps and provide a service in the rural area," she said.

To make an appointment call Mrs McAllister on 9582 8113.

People can also drop in on February 11 from 10am-noon.

### PMHS Brings A New Service To Waroona

Following an interagency meeting in Waroona at the end of 2014, Peel Mobile Health Service (PMHS) and The Compassionate Friends collaborated to enable the commencement of The Compassionate Friends service in Waroona.

On 11th February the help that so many community members needed arrived when the ladies spent the morning in Waroona. The Compassionate Friends is a charitable organisation offering support and care for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

The service was very well received and the next visit to Waroona is on the 1st April.

Source: The Murray Mail (Tuesday 10th February 2015)

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