

Let's muster for mental health

Australian Rotary Health is about to embark on a very ambitious project! We thought we had "done it all" – bikes, walks, runs, golf, horse races!

But how about touring caravans all the way around Australia?

The idea came from the Rotary Tag Along tours, where Rotarians and others would gather and participate in a caravanning tour in a defined area of Australia. These tours have been successfully held for several years and the opportunity came in 2016 for Australian Rotary Health to be the beneficiary of funds raised for our mental health programs during the Tasmanian tour.

The Australian Rotary Health Muster for Mental Health Hop-on-Hop-off will commence in July 2017, when it will take off from our base in Parramatta on the first leg to Rockhampton – the "Run to Rocky".

There will be 12 drives all up over two calendar years. The seventh drive concludes in the hometown of ARH – Mornington, Vic – on November 30, 2017. We then break for Christmas and January, and start up again on Drive 8 – the "Run around Tasmania" in early February 2018. The final drive – Drive 12 – will bring us back to Parramatta, our home base, in early June 2018.

You can join us. We would love you to be with us for the entire time with your caravan, mobile home or car, or come along for one of our "Runs". You have the option to complete as little or as many as you want. Each stage is approximately 15 days.

On the road with a purpose to bring awareness and forums on mental health and youth suicide! We are all independent, but not alone on the Muster for Mental Health.

For more details contact ARH corporate manager Terry Davies on 02 8837 1900 or terry@arh.org.au. •



Australian Rotary Health
with CEO
Joy Gillett



Rotary recreational reading for wrinklies

Since 2005, the Rotary Club of Padstow, NSW, has collected unsold magazines from local newsagents and distributed them to nine local nursing homes and aged care facilities, as well as a local school.

It is usual practice for newsagents to tear off the front page of unsold magazines, post them back to the publisher for a credit, and throw away the rest. Overseen by project manager Garry Metcalfe, the club now collects the unsold magazines each week and puts a label on each, which recognises the donating business and Rotary's delivery effort.

The first year of the project saw nearly 5000 magazines handed out, a number that climbed to over 15,000 last year. The magazines are collected from just two newsagents alone, with additional amounts donated by members of the public.

Despite the volume, it only takes one or two members to do the collection each week and three to do deliveries. The cost is \$3 a week in labels and a few hours sorting and delivering.

Magazines cover almost every interest imaginable, with puzzle and

crossword titles particularly popular with seniors. If the Rotary club hears a resident has a special interest, such as aviation or photography, they ensure publications on the topic reach them.

Some nursing homes have local primary school students read the magazines to residents. Surfing, skateboarding and horse magazines are happily accepted by the students as a thank you for "reading to the wrinklies". Magazines are also cut up for other purposes, such as arts and crafts projects.

The children's magazines, which often include posters and trinkets, are given to a primary school where they are used as learning incentives by teachers.

The Rotary Club of Padstow encourages other clubs to consider similar projects to foster literacy rates.

"Kids who see adults reading are more inclined to read themselves," said Padstow member Barry Thompson. "Even dads and mums who aren't big readers often can't resist the car, boating, cooking and craft magazines. It's a great low-cost project any club could implement."



Project manager Garry Metcalfe, of the Rotary Club of Padstow, sorts through piles of unsold magazines ready for redistribution.

If you are in need of counselling, contact the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 or Lifeline on 13 11 14 (Aus), 0800 543 354 (NZ) or visit www.lifeline.org.nz