

The Iris Foundation is a registered charity which supports community initiatives developed and/or facilitated on the Central Coast of NSW with the aim of reducing suicide in our community through early intervention. The Foundation is funded by grants and donations from individuals, groups, businesses and clubs.

TREE OF DREAMS - A SUCCESS

The **Tree of Dreams™**, which aims to generate conversation around mental well-being and suicide on the Central Coast, expanded significantly this year, with local people and businesses warmly embracing the project.

Proudly situated at the Wyong Milk Factory site, the Tree represented an opportunity to contribute a note of love, a message of strength, a dream and hope of a brighter day. For some, hand-written tags adorning the tree were a memorable way to acknowledge and pay tribute to those they have lost.

Major support came from Wyong Milk Factory, Wyong Rugby League Club Group, Radio 2GO & SeaFM and Wyong Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank. Tags were sold via outlets and online from August 18 until September 10 – World Suicide Prevention Day.

Local businesses, community groups and individuals also jumped on board to sponsor baskets of tags, allowing hundreds of young people to share messages of hope and solace.



A reception and tree-lighting ceremony for supporters of the project was held on September 7. A plaque was unveiled as a permanent reminder of the Tree's significance. **Tree of Dreams™** shone spectacularly against the night sky as local musician Wendy Gill (pictured) sang her song, 'Hymn for Life', that she had penned specifically for the event.

This is set to become a significant yearly event.

In other news...

- Wellness program updates
- Westpac funding announced
- New community partnerships
-and more

WESTPAC FOUNDATION GRANT



The Iris Foundation is very pleased to announce it has successfully secured a 2017 Westpac Foundation Community Grant.

This \$10,000 grant will allow the Foundation to develop its current programs, which offer participants a set of practical tools to build resilience – the ability to recover effectively from stress and setbacks. The pilot program will be offered to two community groups in the Hunter region whose members have experienced domestic violence, relationship breakdown and other trauma.

The pilot program will include 10 weekly sessions and incorporate an artistic component, such as scrapbooking or rock painting, which will help participants create a new chapter in their life stories, free from the turmoil of the past.

Facilitators will draw on existing relationships with local community groups and law enforcement to further support participants and forge stronger connections within families and in the wider community.

The Iris Foundation gratefully acknowledges the Westpac Foundation for supporting its efforts to improve mental health in the Central Coast-Hunter region.

SUICIDE PREVENTION SPEAKERS TRAINED

The Iris Foundation has partnered with Suicide Prevention Australia to train seven speakers to share messages of hope and impart practical ways to prevent suicide in the community.



Participants, each with a lived experience of suicide, took part in an intensive two-day training workshop in late May. This grants them accreditation with Suicide Prevention Australia's Lived Experience Speakers Bureau.

"We felt incredibly honoured to have been invited to deliver the workshop to this amazing group of people. Participants courageously shared their stories with passion, sometimes humour and a strong message for the community," Co-facilitator Tracey McCown said.

There are currently 10 accredited speakers in the Central Coast/Hunter region. If you are interested to hear from a speaker with lived experience, please email your request to: enquiries@irisfoundation.org.au.

Suicide Prevention Australia defines 'lived experience' as having experienced suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, cared for someone who has attempted suicide, been bereaved by suicide, or been touched by suicide in another way.

COOL CONNECTIONS IN SCHOOL

The Cool Connections program continues to be rolled out in schools across the Central Coast.

Cool Connections, is a six-week, in-school program for students between 8 and 12 years of age. It aims to increase self-esteem, build confidence and help children identify positive qualities about themselves – unearthing their own ‘superpowers’.

During terms two and three, students at local public schools including Budgewoi, Lake Munmorah and Blue Haven took part in the program, which provides them with practical tools to reduce stress and build self-esteem, with an engaging creative focus.

“The sessions were relevant and progressive week to week. Students were very keen to come along and would approach me to talk about the program. Word has gotten out to the other kids about how cool it is.”

- Blue Haven Public School

The Iris Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Care Trust and Elderslee Foundation for the funding of our Cool Connections programs.



LIFE CONNECTIONS



Life Connections is a six-week program for adults which aims to build resilience – the ability to manage challenges effectively. The program has proven particularly useful for parents, who are looking to boost their confidence, gather practical tools to better handle the hurdles and hiccups of their daily lives, and to make social connections. Following recent success with a group of parents from HopeTown School (pictured), the program will return to Parents Next at Max Employment Wyong in late October.

The Iris Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Elderslee Foundation for the funding of our Life Connections programs.



DONATE AT WYONG MILK FACTORY



Wyong Milk Factory has kindly installed a donation point for the Iris Foundation.

Visitors can now donate money through a secure slot located near the entrance to the factory grounds – right next to the smiling Buddha statue. Funds raised will go directly to promoting the prevention of suicide by reducing the risk of problems before they start – early intervention.

SPONSOR US!

The Iris Foundation could not do its work without the generosity of sponsors and is extremely grateful for their support.

Is your business interested in supporting suicide prevention strategies on the Central Coast? If so, please contact us for a sponsorship pack or for more information: sue@irisfoundation.org.au

HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

All donations of \$2 and more are tax deductible.

The Iris Foundation relies on the generous donations from businesses and individuals. Please help us to help others.

Cheques: payable to 'Iris Foundation'

Direct deposit: Iris Foundation Australia Ltd;
Bendigo Bank Wyong
(BSB: 633 000 Acct: 157016916)

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



The Iris Foundation would particularly like to acknowledge the major supporters of our **Tree of Dreams™** project.



Tree of Dreams™ also supported by:



...as well as many people on the Central Coast who purchased tags and made donations. Thank you!