

## Media Release

12 February 2019

### New Social Inclusion Project improving outcomes for young people

In Australia, suicide remains the leading cause of death for young people aged between 15 and 44 and the number of deaths in young Australians is the highest it has been in 10 years.

In response to these statistics, an initiative has been developed by BCYF in partnership with the Rotary Club of Belmont (Victoria), to support young people in Geelong to improve their overall health and wellbeing and connect them into appropriate supports.

"Three years ago the Rotary Club of Belmont set a goal to make a difference and provide increased opportunities for mentoring, promotion and overall support for young people in our community. We contacted BCYF and their headspace Geelong program to help improve the health and wellbeing of our young people in the Geelong region," said David Yelland, President of Rotary Club of Belmont.

"Over the past three years, the Club has successfully raised and donated \$188,000 to BCYF to fund the new 'Social Inclusion' project," Mr Yelland added.

Kate Morrissy, Acting CEO, BCYF said the incredible support from the Rotary Club of Belmont has enabled BCYF, who deliver the headspace Geelong service, to create a unique new pilot program to support young people in Geelong.

"We were experiencing an increasing number of referrals to our headspace Geelong service from young people who were experiencing a range of mental health issues, and were disengaged from education, training and social settings. In partnership with the Rotary Club of Belmont we have been able to develop and fund the 'Social Inclusion' project which uses a social outreach model to deliver support and interventions to help young people overcome these problems." Ms Morrissy said.

The 'Social Inclusion' project targets isolated young people and offers them one-on-one mentoring support, as well as access to group sessions to assist young people build connections within the community and overcome isolation issues.

Ms Morrissy said since the program began in 2017, it has provided 300 one-on-one support and 60 group sessions and many strong long term positive outcomes from the young participants.

"Following involvement in the Social Inclusion program, we are seeing the young people developing their confidence and self-esteem, improving family relationships, decreasing drug and alcohol use and engaging in study or work opportunities in their community. These outcomes are thanks to the support of the Rotary Club of Belmont who have provided funding to firstly establish and then further expand the program to more young people."

One of the young participants Jake said "Before the program I was heavily on drugs, I didn't want to leave the house, was always in my room and didn't want to wake up every morning.



Now I'm going back to school and I'm in a program where I have fun every week and meet new people."

The Rotary Club of Belmont will be holding the 3rd annual Business Charity Luncheon on 3 May 2019 and are aiming to raise a further \$70,000 towards the continuation of the Social Inclusion Project for BCYF service headspace Geelong. This year's guest speaker will be Dylan Alcott. For more information or to support the event email [rotary.buslunch@advisory.net.au](mailto:rotary.buslunch@advisory.net.au) or call 0408 524 060.

BCYF is the lead agency for headspace Geelong supporting young people in the Geelong community from its new Youth Services Hub in Central Geelong. Located in Ryrle street Geelong, BCYF Youth Services and the headspace Geelong service are providing better access and service integration for young people aged 10-25 years.

Anyone can refer young people to BCYF's headspace Geelong and Youth Services. Contact either: Headspace Geelong Advice and Referral: 5222 6690 or Youth Services Youth Entry Point Intake: 1800 825 955 or 5246 7500

Contact Rotary Club of Belmont: [facebook.com/belmontrotary9780](https://www.facebook.com/belmontrotary9780)

**Photo & interview opportunity with young person:**

<b>What?</b>	<i>Young male aged who has been part of the Social Inclusion Program</i>
<b>When?</b>	3pm, Thursday 14 February
<b>Where?</b>	Ocean Grove main beach (exact location TBC)

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