

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A FAIR GO

WRAD has joined with other Warrnambool health agencies and police to call for a “fair go” for people challenged by mental health and alcohol and other drug issues, especially since COVID-19.

WRAD, South West Healthcare, Brophy Family and Youth Services and Warrnambool Police say that treatment works and people should be supported and encouraged to access local services.

There is a fear that some people may avoid asking for help because of stigma but when they do, they can find a pathway to recovery.

WRAD operations manager Mark Powell said people with problems related to their use of substances and mental health issues deserve a “fair go” and a hopeful and welcoming treatment response. “Too often the person using substances is judged harshly rather than given a chance to be heard,” he said. “Drugs are only a small part of the picture as these clients often have emotional, psychological, mental health and homelessness and employment issues.

“There are many reasons why people avoid seeking help and see themselves as unworthy of support. We need to tackle stigma and support people who are struggling in our community.”

Mark stressed that treatment works and there are pathways to recovery for people. “But that can only happen when a person believes in themselves and that

change is possible. Negative portrayals of people who use substances do not help that process.”

South West Healthcare CEO Craig Fraser said it was important to send a positive message that there is help and support available.

“The last 12 months have been especially difficult for people who present with mental health, alcohol and drugs and psychological issues. South West Healthcare is part of the local service system dedicated to assisting those struggling and in need of treatment.”

Brophy Family and Youth Services CEO Francis Broekman said a problem shared is a problem halved and people dealing with AOD and mental health issues benefit from professional expertise.

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We need to tackle stigma and support people who are struggling in our community.”

“While you may feel it’s very personal for yourself, many others face the same issues and professionals see these patterns and work through treatment in a way that’s positive and will work,” Francis said.

“All of us may feel vulnerable at some point in our lives and it’s important to know we can seek services without any sense of being stigmatised,” he added.

Senior Sergeant Shane Keogh of Warrnambool Police said treatment programs worked and people should act before it’s too late.

“If people drink, smoke cigarettes or use other drugs and need to give up, it helps if they get support,” he said.

“If you want to give it up, the support is out there to help and it works. From a policing perspective, we ask people to take the opportunity to get those supports. If you’re genuine about wanting help, don’t wait for it to become a criminal matter.”



FROM LEFT:

Senior Sergeant Shane Keogh, WRAD Director Geoff Soma, WRAD Operations Manager Mark Powell, Brophy CEO Francis Broekman and South West Healthcare CEO Craig Fraser join forces to campaign for a fair go for people tackling AOD problems.

SHORT STORY COMP HIGHLIGHTS RECOVERY

WRAD is showcasing recovery from addiction with its new short story competition to showcase recovery from addiction.

The competition is open for friends, families and supportive community members to write short stories with the focus on recovery from alcohol and other drugs and to highlight the message that treatment works.

Prize money of \$2,500 is being offered and Warrnambool-based author Paul Jennings is patron and judge of the competition.

Mr Jennings said he totally supported the work of WRAD in helping people to deal with alcohol and other drug-related issues.

"Sharing these stories is a way of stimulating discussion in the community and to show there is a road to recovery," Paul said.

WRAD Director Geoff Soma said the competition was an opportunity for people to use their perspective to generate discussion and understanding about addiction issues.

"Discussing addiction helps to destigmatise the problems and to show others that it is a health issue that could afflict anyone in the community.

"We hope this competition inspires people to address their problems. Often people affected by addiction don't ask for help because they feel stigma and shame; this needs to change."

The stories have a 1000-word limit. The competition started March 19 and entries must be lodged by April 30. The first prize will be \$1200, second \$650, third \$400 and \$250 for a Paul Jennings special award.

For more information, people can contact:

Geoff Soma at WRAD on 1300 009723
or Rick Bayne on 0418 140489.

In a separate initiative, WRAD is compiling a special publication telling the personal stories of clients who have recovered from addiction after treatment.

“

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PAUL JENNINGS

NEW WEBSITE

WRAD has a new website to keep the community up-to-date:



Check in regularly for fresh updates.

As part of the new site, WRAD has also produced a video that features on the home page and is also available on YouTube.

Simply search for WRAD Warrnambool and you will be able to view the video on YouTube or follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvDex6-8MnQ&t=10s>

WRAD has also created a Twitter account <https://twitter.com/WradCentre> and continues on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/wradcentre>.

"We look forward to developing beneficial partnerships," Geoff said.

"WRAD will continue to openly communicate any progress with The Lookout project and at the appropriate time, WRAD will also invite representation for a community consultation committee.

WRAD hopes the residential rehabilitation centre will be included in the 2021-22 state budget and has been talking with DHSS to develop a plan for the next stage of the Lookout's development.



Two new murals at WRAD tell stories of recovery and hope, and a third mural is on the way:

JOURNEY OF RECOVERY

A mural painted by Koroit artist Ricky Schembri, based on a concept developed with WRAD operations director Mark Powell, depicts a number of key elements of the journey of recovery.

The lighthouse symbolises safety, a beacon of hope, and security. The dog symbolises loyalty, a faithful and non-judgmental companion that everyone needs to help support them in the journey towards recovery.

The path offers direction, if people are willing to walk that path. It is slightly uphill as, like many journeys, it's not going to be easy. Journeys of recovery require a step outside of the comfort zone, so for recovery to be achieved a person has to be ready and willing to take those steps.

The lighthouse from Flagstaff Hill is used to represent the importance of the local community in supporting this journey.

The person is not gender specific as the journey of recovery is for all people regardless of culture, race, sexuality, gender or age.

Universally, eagles are a symbol of power; they can rise over the world, seeing and understanding all. The eagle bestows freedom and courage to look ahead and is symbolic of the importance of honesty and truthful principles, qualities helpful for the journey of recovery.



In the mythology of some of the Aboriginal peoples of Victoria, Bunjil is a creator deity, culture hero and ancestral being, often depicted as a wedge-tailed eagle.

The sunset is symbolic of the ending of the day and a new beginning from tomorrow. The old adage is a "red sky at night means sailors delight" suggests that tomorrow will be a better day and we should hold onto hope for a brighter future.

Ricky Schembri said the project had been an interesting challenge, especially as he usually works in landscape pastels.

"It was really good in overcast weather but when the sun comes on it in the afternoons the paint dries instantly, so I've had to adjust and finish it off in the mornings," he said.

This is Ricky's third mural and the subject has resonated.

"They told me what they wanted and to include and I designed sketches based on local images and they really liked it," he said. "Everyone has some sort of destination they want to work towards."

The project was supported by COATES Hire with supply of a scissor lift and Dean Flett from Dulux Trade Warrnambool.



EBONY BUTCHER

NEW ADMIN TRAINEE

After working in aged care since leaving school, Ebony Butcher had an affinity with health but always wanted to work in administration.

At WRAD she gets the best of both worlds as the centre's first admin trainee.

Ebony has moved from Portland for the 12-month traineeship and is relishing the challenge.

"I had been working in aged care since leaving school but was wanting an admin job for quite a while," she said. "It's quite hard to get an admin role in a small town and because I had a background in health, WRAD seemed like a good fit."

Since joining WRAD in January, Ebony, 23, says she has enjoyed the transition. "It's a great place to work and everyone is very friendly."

So far, her role has been centred on front reception, directing patients and clients to their appointments and taking bookings but she will move into other areas of the medical service later in the traineeship.

BRIGHT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Indigenous artist Fiona Clarke's mural on WRAD's western wall is a "Bright Hope for the Future" and it's also something of an online star.

After sharing the mural on her LinkedIn account, Fiona was amazed at the response.

"When I last looked it had had 6,313 views," she said. "I usually get over 1,000 views on my paintings, some almost to 2,000 but the mural was very popular."

Based in Melbourne since 2018, Fiona is a Kirrae Whurrong woman and retains close links with the south-west and was happy to share her talents and message of hope with WRAD and everyone who sees the mural.

"My mural's main message is of bright hope for the future through self-respect; respect for the environment, as well as commitment to yourself," Fiona said.

"At its heart is a central circle representing WRAD, with the smaller circles the many areas of support reaching out to those ready to seek help.

"The bright colours are for enlightening, healing and warmth as we all need warmth to feel welcomed, cared for and comforted."

Fiona says there are many areas of support such as help for carers, help with mental health issues contributing to drug and alcohol addictions, therapies, programs or activities that help build stronger minds and motivation to not give up hope. "Go and get help, don't be afraid to do it because help is always there," she added.

The mural also has connections to country.

"It reminds people to be mindful of the land they stand on. If you look after Mother Earth she will look after you. Like if you look after yourself you will be much happier and be able to handle all the things that happen in life better."

For more than 30 years Fiona has depicted her Aboriginal culture through the visual arts, including tapestry, painting, public art and through children's literature. Her work is in collections nationally and internationally and recently her focus is on public arts, including being commissioned to create works, in Warrnambool, Colac, Camperdown, Terang, and Melbourne.

In 2016 Cricket Australia chose Fiona's design, 'Walkabout Wickets' to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first Aboriginal XI Cricket team to play at the MCG and her designs have been used in the Big Bash League.

Ballarat Lines Unit and Regional Rail Revival Projects also commissioned Fiona and her husband Ken McKean to complete art works for five train station upgrades.



At its heart is a central circle representing WRAD, with the smaller circles the many areas of support reaching out to those ready to seek help

FIONA CLARKE

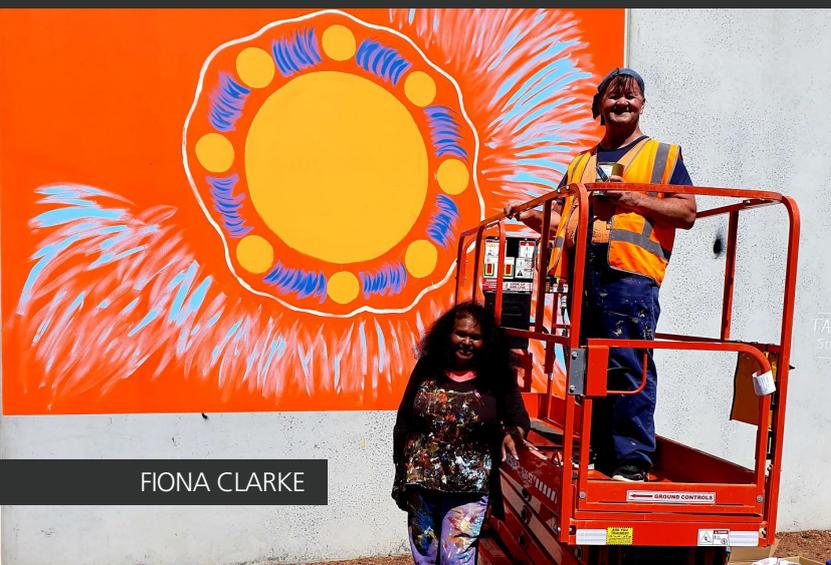
Jimmi Buscombe is the latest artist to share his talents on WRAD's mural wall.

Jimmi's stunning design of a black cockatoo will add another dimension to the increasingly colourful wall.

Examples of Jimmi's public and street art are already well known around Warrnambool and beyond, including the now famous mural "Gutsy the Warrnambool Wombat". The wombat was created in April 2018 as a temporary chalk piece so Jimmi could practice for a separate 3D artwork he had been commissioned to do by Warrnambool City Council.

"I was going to leave it up for a few days and then wash it off, but then a local larrikin painter Phil Hoye snuck over and painted a clear coat over the top of it," Jimmi said.

An ABC video report on the mural went viral, attracting more than 125,000 views.



FIONA CLARKE



JIMMI BUSCOMBE

DONATION CREATES WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

A new art donation is helping to create a welcoming environment for visitors to WRAD and the Handbury Medical Suites.

Portland artist Judy Antill's Fire Rocks is now on display in the WRAD Centre's waiting room.

The painting of rockpools at The Spill at Cape Grant Portland has a market value of \$5-6000 and was chosen to bring brightness to the area.

While much of Judy's art reflects narratives connected to her human rights works, Fire Rocks shows a bubble pool and a warm, inviting image.

"It's a happy painting," she said. "I just wanted people to come into WRAD and sit down and see something that will cheer them up a bit. Many people using WRAD's



services have sad problems to deal with, so it's nice if we can bring them some cheer."

Judy has also donated two drawings from the Villa San Michele series to WRAD which have been framed by Gary Francis for display in the upper hallway.

WRAD Director Geoff Soma said the new art would provide additional support for clients.

"We're very grateful for this very generous donation which will be placed in the waiting room to cheer up the environment and provide a friendly welcome to everyone," Geoff said.

SMART PROGRAM

WRAD has started a SMART Family & Friends program to assist anyone affected by the addictive behaviour of someone close to them. Contact Mark Powell on 1300 009 723 or to register call ACSO 1300 022 760.

DUAL DIAGNOSIS SUPPORT

Having a co-occurring mental health and substance use issue happens more often than not, but WRAD's new dual diagnosis clinician Rebecca Smith is helping to ease the burden.

Rebecca's role involves supporting clients who present to WRAD with co-occurring issues, providing them with counselling and referrals.

Dual diagnosis is now widely recognised. "Most clients have a co-occurring issue, whether it is diagnosed or not," Rebecca said. "Around 80 per cent of drug and alcohol clients have a dual diagnosis issue and a lot of clients who come to us have significant trauma issues or anxiety or depression."

"Clients will say they use substances to self-medicate their anxiety or depression, while others will use substances and then they may develop mental health concerns, such as a drug-induced psychosis from methamphetamines or cannabis," Rebecca said.

Funded by the Primary Health Network (PHN), Rebecca will seek further collaborations with related health agencies and support other services where needed as she settles into the role, and will also look at opportunities for group programs.

After starting as a hospital-trained nurse, Rebecca moved into the drug and alcohol field about 27 years ago. She completed post graduate studies in health sciences at Curtin University in Western Australia, majoring in addiction studies. "I always had an interest in drug and alcohol issues and had some friends who had personal experiences," she said.

She was attracted to WA because clinical psychologist Professor Bill Saunders was heading up the addiction studies course.

She remained there for a few years, consolidating in the field what she had learnt at university, before returning back to Victoria to work for two years at Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery in Melbourne.

She returned to WA where she has been for the past 20 years to work in a variety of drug and alcohol positions, such as home-based withdrawal, residential withdrawal, assessments and case management coordination for pharmacotherapy clients.

Recently relocating to Warrnambool with her family, Rebecca was not actively looking for work. "I saw the ad for a dual diagnosis clinician so I rang and was encouraged to apply for the position and here I am," she said.

It is her first time in a specific dual diagnosis role, although she has consistently worked in an informal way with dual diagnosis clients and has completed mental health nursing post-grad study.

"It's a challenging role with plenty of opportunities to collaborate with services and improve ways in which we can work together for better outcomes for those needing support with their mental health and substance use," Rebecca said.

Her role also entails coordinating referrals from GPs at Handbury Medical Suites and other GPs around Warrnambool to addiction psychiatrist Dr Harry Hill.

PROACTIVE APPROACH

Harriet Rose likes to be proactive rather than reactive in her work, which is why she has gravitated to working with young people.

WRAD's new assertive youth outreach worker had been working in healthcare for more than a decade before gravitating to the AOD and mental health field, with a particular focus on young people.

"I like to work with highly vulnerable people who are very motivated and receptive to support," she said. "I especially like working with young people because I'm interested in early intervention, working with families before it gets to a crisis point. I like to be proactive rather than reactive."

Harriet has moved from a similar assertive youth role in Melbourne, although she has noticed significant differences in practice.

"In Melbourne, part of the role involved being out on the streets; here's it's more about developing relationships with schools and the community and creating outposts," Harriet said.

Harriet previously worked for Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) and said the service was well known for supporting young people.

"It is a youth-only organisation so it was easy for people to call and self-refer. We will work on developing that reputation at WRAD as it is sometimes perceived as an adult service when in reality it can also help young people."

Harriet grew up in Maryborough and was keen to leave the city after enduring Melbourne's tough 2020 lockdowns. Her partner is Port Fairy born and bred and has a job here.

Her working career started in hospital nursing before advancing to community nursing and then maternal and child health.

"I enjoyed drug and alcohol work there and realised that was my special interest," Harriet said. "I did further training in mental health and addiction in 2017 and then jumped into that industry, working at a detox unit, needle syringe exchange program and prison drug and alcohol program before YSAS."



HARRIET ROSE

AN EYE-OPENING CHANGE

Working in the mental health field opened the eyes of Sliding Doors new group facilitator Ginny Ludeman to the influence of drugs and alcohol.

"Sadly, AOD is such a huge part of our society," Ginny said. "Doing work in mental health opened my eyes to

broader mental health problems and how alcohol and drugs are such a big part of that."

Ginny has strong links to local communities, having been born and raised in Garvoc, educated in Warrnambool and living in Koroit for the past 24 years.

After working in administration earlier in her life before taking a long break to raise her children, Ginny decided to look at different work options as her children neared the end of their schooling.



GINNY LUDEMAN

From coaching netball and being a committee member and mentor with Standing Tall, Ginny realised how much she liked working with young people.

"There was a Free TAFE course and I thought I had nothing to lose so I did a Diploma in Community Services and loved it," she said. "I was never a huge fan of school, but it makes so much difference when you're learning something you want to learn about."

Ginny started the diploma with the aim of working with youth, potentially in school wellbeing programs.

She is completing her study, she worked as a support worker for people with complex mental health issues.

"I still feel strongly about youth, but after getting into the mental health field and working with participants it opened my eyes to look into other sectors," she said. "It's a different world to when I was a teenager."

Her work offers Sliding Doors clients strategies for recovery based on cognitive behavioural therapy. "It's about getting clients to change their way of thinking so they can work towards recovery," she said.

It is her first foray into direct AOD work but Ginny loves the challenge and rewards. She is now planning to start a diploma in alcohol and drugs through Odyssey House.

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To find out more and to keep up with the latest news about WRAD, please visit:

www.wrad.org.au

www.facebook.com/wradcentre 

www.twitter.com/WradCentre 

The gateway into AOD treatment is through the ACSO Intake:

**Call: 1300 002 760 Mon to Fri 9am-5pm
or Email: gscintake@acso.org.au**

You can also contact Directline on **1800 888 236** for information and out of hours support.