



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental Health Of Primary School Students In The Goldfields Prioritised

In August, The Goldfields Young Heroes Tour empowered high school students across the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area to positively manage their mental health. Now it's the younger students' turn.

The Goldfields Young Heroes Tour, powered by MLG and Topdrill, is returning to deliver mental health programs to 16 primary schools, educating over 1,000 students as young as nine-years-old in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the northern Goldfields.

The tour will take place from **8 – 13 October**, and not only aims to educate primary school students but also aims to upskill teachers on how to best provide mental health support to young people.

The programs will be led by youth mental health charity zero2hero, empowering primary school students to connect with themselves and each other to better understand their needs and how to ask for help.

zero2hero CEO Ashlee Harrison says that education and early intervention amongst young people in remote areas is key in preventing suicide in Western Australia.

"We've found that mental health issues can arise from a very young age. This tour aims to encourage students as young as 9 to feel comfortable in accessing support when they need it," she said.

"Traditionally, the mental health system has focused on crisis support and treatment, but by offering a hand up rather than a hand-out during early stages of an individual's life, we believe mental health can be improved and suicide can be prevented. That's why we need to start with our young heroes!"

"The programs that we will be delivering on the Goldfields Young Heroes Tour are one-of-a-kind, that allow young people to connect with themselves and each other, to understand their needs and how to ask for help."

"We also work hard to ensure school's understand the importance of incorporating mental health into their curriculum, and hold space for young people to break the stigma surrounding mental health."

The tour will also include engaging with young people at Kalgoorlie-Boulder's Youth Fest on Saturday, October 8, and at the gaming lounge on Sunday, October 9.

With mental health issues among young people in the Goldfields on the rise, six West Australian organisations have partnered with zero2hero to bring the second Goldfields Young Heroes Tour to life – MLG Oz, Topdrill, Ali Kent MLA, HOPE Community Services, Headspace and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. With this support, The Goldfield's Young Heroes Tour will be delivered to schools free of charge.

This October Tour comes after a successful first tour in August, which impacted over 1,600 high school students across 16 high schools.

Kalgoorlie MP Ali Kent says she is a "passionate advocate" of trying to improve access to services for young people in the region.

“Improving access to young people dealing with mental health issues in the Goldfields has been a priority for me from day one, and I’m thrilled to have sourced and locked in zero2hero. Now young people in the Goldfields have a chance to access the tools to help them navigate a difficult space,” she said.

MLG Oz’s Community Engagement Officer Michelle Leahy says she is also excited to be bringing the tour back for the second time in 2 months.

“Educating our kids and equipping them with the tools to monitor their own mental health as well as that of their mates is an approach that just makes sense,” she said.

Topdrill’s Managing Director Tim Topham says he is proud to be partnering with MLG to help bring zero2hero programs to the Goldfields for the area’s young people.

The need for mental health support for young people in regional areas of Australia is critical. ABS statistics from 2020 show that rates of death by suicide are higher in regional Australia; 15.7 deaths per 100,000 outside capital cities, compared with 10.3 deaths per 100,000 in capital cities.

In 2020, there were 223 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia who died by suicide, with the median age being 31.3 years. This is more than a decade younger than the median age of death by suicide for the general population.

In Australia, 75% of mental health problems emerge before the age of 25, therefore it is crucial to educate our youth about how to best support themselves, their peers and community.

All partners involved in this tour are available for extra comments and photographs throughout the week.

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About zero2hero

Founded in 2009, zero2hero is a Perth-based not-for-profit organisation committed to youth mental health and the prevention of suicide. Our vision is that every child and young person is educated and empowered to effectively deal with mental health issues. We provide school-based programs for children and young people that develops their understanding of mental health issues and awareness of mental health services.

Our CEO Ashlee Harrison was awarded the Western Australian of the Year – Youth Award in 2014.

For more information, please visit our website: zero2hero.com.au