

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Kalgoorlie Footy Clubs Are Tackling Suicide Head On**

Changing locker room conversation for young footballers in the wider Kalgoorlie area will be the main focus of a mental health tour coming to the area.

With local football clubs in the region experiencing the tragic loss of several young men to suicide over the past few years, the West Australian Football Commission, Kalgoorlie MP Ali Kent and mining company Gold Fields, are joining forces with youth mental health charity zero2hero to help support the community.

Regional Manager of the WA Football Commission Goldfields, Gemma Harrison, said that while football clubs provide a place for sport and connection, there's also an opportunity to focus on the wellbeing and mental health of its players, members and wider community.

"Several Country Football Clubs across the State have been impacted by recent critical incidents," she said.

"We are hoping this tour will reduce stigma, build participants confidence to engage in positive conversations around health and wellbeing and strengthen club environments."

"I am delighted to have had the opportunity to work in partnership with everyone involved in this tour to roll out such incredibly powerful sessions to our local footballers and support staff. Acknowledgement must also go to the local clubs who have opened their doors to us."

Between **March 13 – 17**, mental health workshops will be delivered to 150 young players across 5 football clubs in Kalgoorlie and surrounding areas, to empower young footballers to become more suicide alert.

This workshop is called safeTALK and will be delivered by trained zero2hero facilitators free of charge for the players.

zero2hero CEO, Ashlee Harrison, said the safeTALK program prepares anyone over the age of 15 to become a suicide alert helper.

"The program will encourage young people's willingness, confidence and ability to recognise when a person, like their fellow teammate, may be having thoughts of suicide and safely guide them to access further help from mental health support services as needed," she said.

"We know that young people turn to their friends when they are struggling, not adults, and that they are the least likely to seek help. So, when a young people knows how to comfortably have hard conversations like this, and knows how to safely help them, it has the ability to save lives."

Kalgoorlie MP Ali Kent said a main focus of hers is to get young people in regional areas deserved access to tools that could help improve their mental health.

"I saw how zero2hero was helping so many young people in Perth and thought that we needed to bring those skills and experience to Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Goldfields," she said.

“I’m thrilled that this is happening in the Goldfields. It’s one of the aims that the local group was striving to reach, and is a great step towards ensuring young people in the Goldfields are equipped with the skills necessary to support their own mental health, as well as support others.”

In 2022, ABS statistics reported that 75% of those who take their lives in Australia are male.

“Bringing safeTALK to the footy clubs in this area will enable so many men to get access to the skills and knowledge they may need,” Mrs Kent says.

Executive Vice President of Operations for Gold Field’s Australasia, Stuart Mathews, seconds this push for open conversations around mental health in Kalgoorlie.

“Gold Fields has a genuine commitment to supporting safe and healthy communities through the region. We see the incredible value programs like the zero2hero safeTALK initiative can deliver to the Goldfields by talking openly about mental health and empowering community members to become suicide alert helpers,” he said.

*\*All partners involved in this tour are available for extra comments, and opportunities for photographs during the week can also be arranged.*

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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](http://zero2hero.com.au)