

The Mind Reader

MENTAL HEALTH NEWS, ARTICLES
AND INFORMATION

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CEO Message



Dear readers,

I recently had the pleasure of attending the Communities in Control Conference organised annually by the NFP Our Community. I endeavour to go to the conference each year because it is an opportunity to be inspired by what others are doing, refresh and recharge my enthusiasm and to celebrate the immense value of community for our health and wellbeing. Each speaker and performer at the conference gave me something to contemplate at a personal level and a societal level. While we have moved forward we have stepped back in many aspects that make us a caring, compassionate and supportive society.

The Conference showcases some of the creative programs that are happening now. One that sticks in my mind is [The Good Karma Network](#). The Network started in Melbourne and is now spreading to other parts of Australia. It provides members with the opportunity and permission to ask for help with challenges they are facing in their lives, workplace, family, or home. It works on the premise that when we open ourselves to the possibility of asking for help, we find that there are people with skills, knowledge, experience and resources which they are only too happy to share.

Another wonderful example of community coming together is a project that was set up in the town of Frome in Somerset in the UK. It is called the [Compassionate Frome Project](#) and was launched in 2013 by Helen Kingston, a GP living and working in Frome. She kept encountering patients who felt they were a cluster of symptoms rather than a human being who happened to have health problems. With the help of a National Health Service group and the town council, they employed “health connectors” to help people plan their care, and trained voluntary “community connectors” to help their patients find the support they needed. Sometimes this meant handling debt or housing problems, sometimes joining choirs, lunch clubs or exercise groups, writing workshops or [men's sheds](#). The point was to break a familiar cycle of misery.

Recently Australia has taken up the link between loneliness and ill health. For a long time, loneliness has been ignored as a serious contributor to mental and physical illness. WayAhead is part of a group called the Australian Coalition to End Loneliness. The group has started researching loneliness in Australia and is being led by Michelle Lim, from the Iverson Health Innovation Institute at the Swinburne University of Technology. If you would like to be part of the Coalition or would like to know more you can contact Michelle at mllim@swin.edu.au. I will keep you informed on the progress of this research. I will keep you informed on the progress of this research. Recently our Senior Manager Marge Jackson attended a national leadership roundtable event on how to help people who are chronically lonely. There is a great article in this edition of the magazine about [Marge's experience at the event](#).

Enjoy this edition of Mental Health Matters and if you would like us to contact you on any issued raised here or not raised here but you think is important, we would love to hear from you.

**Have a great read,
Liz**

Buying a packet of mental wellbeing



If you were wandering around the Sydney CBD in late March or early April, you might have spotted a vending machine, standing alone in the middle of Martin Place, Pitt Street Mall or even Customs House Square.

It looked a lot like an ordinary vending machine that sells chips, lollies and chocolates to hungry office workers or shoppers. If you had a chance to take a look, or even buy a package, you would have seen that the machine was selling something very different. Instead of being branded with “Smiths” or “Skittles”, the packaged read “Reassurance”, “Courage” and “Friendship”.

Welcome to the world of Intangible Goods.

Intangible Goods is the brainchild of advertising creatives, Mark Starmach and Elizabeth Commandeur, and was developed and exhibited with support from the City of Sydney’s Art and About public art program. It has been in the works for more than a year and finally came to fruition earlier this year in some of the most iconic places in Sydney’s CBD. We spoke to Mark when he dropped by the WayAhead offices to talk to us about the project.

“At the beginning, it was honestly just a bit of a creative release and a bit of a thought experiment. We have these things in our heads and in our minds that we need. What if they were actually available on a supermarket shelf?” said Mark, of the initial impetus for Intangible Goods.

“I think often mental health is perceived as something really heavy and confronting, especially stuff like mental illness, schizophrenia and all that sort of thing is really big and scary so [trying to] break it down, make it bitesize and snack-size, that sort of became the objective.”

[Watch video.](#)

The creatives were aware of the possibility of potentially reaching thousands of people so they worked with clinicians and the general public to develop each of their Intangible Goods. Mental health professionals Barbara LeBas, [Dr Tim Sharp](#), and Charlotte Stapf worked closely with Mark and Liz to ensure that there was a solid grounding for the goods that they created. Mark and Liz also shared surveys with Sydney-based groups online to get feedback.

“We got over 500 responses from Sydneysiders but 600 responses overall... From that, certain needs simmered to the top and so it was a [very clear hierarchy](#)... right at the top, a need for greater sense of connection with others. Slightly below, there was a split between structure and spontaneity, which are at opposite ends of the spectrum, and then slightly below that was confidence... From those, Liz and I developed concepts for each of the products and then we just kept liaising with Barbara, Tim and Charlotte,” Mark said.

“[The first round of goods] were kind of like if I typed something into Google, I’d get that response. It was super broad and applied to everyone. The second round was completely the opposite. It was way too specific, it was like we kind of developed them for ourselves and then when we tested them on other people, it just

didn't resonate and didn't work but then we kind of got there in the end."

The project certainly did get there in the end, with thousands of Intangible Goods sold over the three weeks that the project was running. The stock often ran low or completely sold out by mid-afternoon. Feedback seemed to support the popularity of the packages with lots of positive stories reaching the creators through social media. Mark shared the story about a young dancer who got in touch after a performance.

"One girl was going to a ballet recital in the morning and then she was walking across Martin Place and she saw the machine and she saw "Reassurance", which is what she needed," he said.

"Reassurance is a card where you're reminding yourself of your previous confidence when you've felt weak so it's this little contract that you sign and put in your wallet. And so she took a picture of that and shared that with us and reached out to us, saying how it helped her get through the day and made her feel less nervous."

We asked Mark why he thought the Intangible Goods had been so well-received and why it seemed to work.

"I think a lot of it is honesty. Just being honest with yourself and doing a bit of an audit and so I suppose, accidentally, the machine forced you to do that by thinking "What do I need?" and then it's presenting you with all these things."

The team at WayAhead really loved the concept too, with staff members visiting the Intangible Goods vending machine and sharing the packages with each other.

"We really love the concept behind Intangible Goods. It is such a simple, effective way of starting conversations and making little changes in our daily lives for better mental health. At WayAhead, we received a sample of each of the Intangible Goods and we really enjoyed opening them up, sharing them around the office and seeing how clever and insightful they were. Although the messages seem simple, each Intangible Good actually conveys complex, best-practice messages about better mental health and wellbeing," said Marge Jackson, Senior Manager at WayAhead.

Proceeds from the sales of Intangible Goods were donated to several mental health organisations including WayAhead. For Mark and Liz, raising funds for charity was always a part of the process. Their work in advertising has also been used to support other charities too, like Amnesty International Australia and Foodbank.

"We've done things in the past like that for charity, where you give something and it's more than what you'd typically see, like a badge or a teddy bear or whatever it is. People engage with it," said Mark.

Since the end of the project, a number of organisations, including workplaces, schools and community groups, have been in touch with the Liz and Mark to see if they could host the Intangible Goods vending machine.

"We've had some enquiries from a number of people, like businesses, who want to run it in their workplace... city councils also want to bring the machine out for local festivals and that sort of thing so there's been a little bit of interest there. And medical conferences – that's the other one – so mental health conferences, and so we're working out how to do that," said Mark.

"People have been asking if they can get their hands on the products without the vending machine, just send it online so we're working out ways to make that happen."

By Tasnim Hossain

Youth mental health takes a bow: The impact of theatre



From young people identifying mental health as their biggest concern, to calls for increased investment in the mental health of 0 to 12-year-olds, the mental wellbeing of young people is a complex issue that we, as a society, are increasingly willing to tackle. However, schools and psychologists' offices are not the only places that can help support a young person's mental wellbeing.

Last year, the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) commissioned research into what, if any, impact their drama programs have had on the mental health of participants over the last few decades. With thousands of young people engaging in programs each year and a history as the largest youth theatre in the country, there were a number of past and current participants' experiences to draw on. For Fraser Corfield, Artistic Director of ATYP, participating in drama workshops offers more than just skills in acting or performing.

"There is a broad understanding that the deteriorating mental health of young Australians is a major issue in this country. It is an issue that we need to address that, at the moment, we are struggling to address. We're also aware that young people, while they are spending more time on devices, are spending less time personally engaging with each other," he said.

"So rather than just a nice feel-good creative outlet, theatre and performance is a really practical way of addressing some really serious issues that are facing broader society. I think this report, certainly for ATYP and the youth arts sector, is the beginning of broadening that conversation."

"ATYP has been using the same philosophy essentially for 53 years. We work with all different artists, on all different projects, but the principle of placing young people at the centre of the work has been the same," said Fraser.

Maintaining social connections is one of the best ways for people to stay mentally well, as illustrated by the message, "Share the Journey", the theme for October's Mental Health Month. This is something that ATYP also identified.

"We talk about the importance of self-expression and telling your own story and "finding your tribe", which is a term that youth theatres use over and over, which is great for people that respond to those sorts of things, but people who don't, who generally are our decision-makers and people with no connection to the arts, do not. They have no interest in those terms at all and even when we talk about innovation and creative thinking and creative problem-solving, the general assumption that that is specifically within a theatre context, not within broader life skills."

However, for those who participated in the research, those broader life skills are exactly what they found drama workshops to have developed. Of the more than 1,200 people who participated in the survey, 89% reported that participating in drama had a positive impact on their self-confidence and 94% of respondents

said that it had a positive impact on their overall sense of wellbeing. Slightly more than half of all respondents – 52% of people – indicated that ATYP had a positive or very positive impact on their anxiety levels.

In the report, it states: “One person noted that as a young boy, he suffered from bullying and severe anxiety. ‘ATYP helped bring me out of my shell and nurtured my passion for performing.’”

“The level of positivity, I have to admit, really caught us by surprise... We weren't expecting it to be this strong.”

There were other aspects to theatre and wellbeing that the survey also uncovered, particularly around the anxiety and stress around performing.

“While the majority of people identified very positive things, some people did find that they found the performance element of participating in drama stressful, which isn't surprising. And my feeling is that those two things are probably connected. So it's the stress leading up to performance that gives the sense of accomplishment and success afterwards,” said Fraser.

ATYP has worked with young people in NSW and around the country through a range of programs that have reached children and young people in a number of ways. Among their projects, one worked directly with young people to create a play responding to their experiences of homelessness.

“The Advocate for Children and Young People got in touch with us and asked whether we would look at creating a show that raises awareness and demystifies homeless amongst teenagers and young people because there are over 18,000 young people in NSW who are classified as homeless. The state government has realised that theatre is a powerful tool to start conversations around social issues.”

Fraser shared an example of a program that ATYP had run with a partner organisation in Tennant Creek. The ATYP residency, along with the partner organisation's rodeo program, was the most effective approach for encouraging young Indigenous children to reengage with schooling.

“Both programs established a positive routine, they gave the young people positive role models, they were something that got the young people interacting with each other in a positive way and delivered a sense of accomplishment... they found, once young people participated in both those programs, they were far more likely to return to school for a period of time. So I think there's a range of things around theatre and performance in terms of just forcing us to connect, reengage, look at the people around us, listen to them and get outside of ourselves. That's hugely beneficial,” he said.

“There's broader conversations at the moment going with [universities] and other project partners about now leveraging this into a three year, national study, involving multiple youth arts organisations to try and drill further into that kind of connection between participation [in the arts] and resilience and mental health.”

For now, ATYP will continue to deliver its weekly drama workshops in Sydney, develop work around Australia and produce theatre that centres the experience of young people, for young people to engage in and see themselves in.

“One of the things that I love about the research is it demonstrates these benefits occur without any conversation around mental health. So there's part of me that goes 'we need to keep that because I think the death knell of theatre, and theatre for young people, is that we keep using theatre to try and teach young people about something,’” said Fraser.

“I think we need to be really careful as the national youth theatre that we don't become issue-based. Having said that, it is also a great opportunity. Theatre, when it's done well, gives us the opportunity to see the world from another person's perspective.”

“We always used to say we were driven to help people act. But actually we're driven to improve the lives of young Australians and the way that we do that, and what we're interested in, is the transformative effect of participating in drama.”

By Tasnim Hossain

Tasnim is a writer for WayAhead and a board director at ATYP. Tasnim was not involved in the ATYP research.

Tackling the effects of trauma with painting and play



In Sydney's north, a group of people plays, dances, sings and paints with hundreds of children each year to give them a better chance to reach their potential. However, they aren't just artists but rather trained expressive therapists who use art and play to help children who have had difficult experiences. Since 2006, KidsXpress has been using expressive therapists to work with children, aged 4 to 14, who have been affected by trauma. Last year, the organisation won the Mental Health Month Excellence in Service or Program Delivery Award for the strength of their work with these children.

Following the win, KidsXpress told WayAhead that they were delighted to be awarded for their work because the "hard work and behind-the-scenes effort that goes into not-for-profit service delivery isn't always recognised, so when it is applauded and receives an award, it truly makes you stand tall and take pride in your work." To find out more about their work and their approach, we spoke to Dr Ben Rockett, the General Manager of KidsXpress.

"I think one of the exciting points that we're at is that there is more focus, there is more attention being given to expressive therapies as a way of engaging in a therapeutic relationship, particularly with insights around how trauma actually impacts the development, but also the ongoing performance, [of children] or the workings of the brain and the social relationships that result," said Dr Rockett.

"The use of the expressive therapy that we have in our program is remarkable for helping children experience their pasts and be able to understand, engage and process [their past] in ways that help them tell their stories, but importantly tell their story in their way. That may be that they do it through words, they engage with their group peers or with their therapists themselves in spoken dialogue, [or] using the modalities to create new environments which are rich in opportunity for them to experience the physical... so using the art, the music and the play to experience different states – physiological states and psychological states – to engage with themselves, but also their stories, and start to tell their story in their way through various modalities. It's an exciting program which allows the child to engage, in the child's language, with their past to make sense of it."

Watch Video.

Children who engage with KidsXpress programs may have experienced trauma or significant stress in situations of abuse or neglect, grief or loss, domestic violence, family breakdown, or other issues due to family members' experiences of mental ill health or substance abuse. The program has demonstrated significant positive benefits. On a cost-benefit basis alone, research conducted by Deloitte in 2016 found that KidsXpress decreased the number of visits to GPs, psychologists and psychiatrists, with cost decreases of 42.6%, 36.8% and 36.6%, respectively.

"When people ask about performance, and what kind of evidence we have, we choose to call them transformation indicators because although we do see some remarkable positive stories – I don't want to use success because, in my mind, it's not about being successful – but the program and the therapists are successful at supporting change, not necessarily finalising or reaching an endpoint. We refer to them as transformation

indicators, as an indication of change occurring for these children and for the families and the schools that they are in," said Dr Rockett.

"We have eight key metrics that we follow and they include things such as self-awareness, self-regulation, connection to others, self-expression. What we're looking for there are aspects of wellbeing and aspects of psychosocial health, which are typically impacted by trauma responses. Those are the elements that we look at for indicators of change to suggest that the child is starting to feel more safe, or more regulated, or more connected. That's really what informs the program on a week-by-week basis. It's a really rich environment of planning and evaluation after every session. And that's the beauty of the program."

The program has been developed so that children can engage in the way that best suits them and in which they are most comfortable. The need to make the program responsive to the needs of each child, based on information that KidsXpress gathers, is constant.

"We try and track our clients for up to a year afterwards and to see what change is occurring but also, importantly, where is that change occurring. To get more understanding, what we do from a research perspective is look at it from a multistakeholder perspective, so we get the client's view, our therapists' view, we get the referrer's view, we get the family's view and we capture the data on as many time points as can throughout the program and...three, six and twelve months after the program has been completed to see who has seen change, because if, say, four out of five have been changed, but one has not, it could be that the area where that is not being noticed is an area that needs resourcing," said Dr Rockett.

"So we can say, "well, we're not seeing change in this particular area, what support can we put in place to help that relationship?" Or if we're interested in one area, why are these changes that we see in therapy not necessarily translating into school or home life as well, so what support could come from there? So the data is very much live. It's not about saying what can we show did happen, it's very much about saying "well, what's going on and what needs to happen?"

For Dr Rockett and the team at KidsXpress, the changes that take place for children engaged with their programs can take time. Often those changes can seem small, or not be apparent for a number of years. However, the benefits into the future can be significant in changing the lives of children, and the strengths of the relationships that they form, as they grow into adulthood.

"It takes time for those relationships to be tested and for those relationships to change and so it may be that some of the work which happens in our program, if we can also change the caregiving environment, we may not see some of the change really being...successful until a year, two years, three years, five years down the line, or even, some of the times, it's the aggregate of all of the support that goes in that we don't even necessarily see play out until they, the children, find themselves in care-giving roles themselves. There's a beauty in that as well because we know that through early intervention, we're trying to do something today that changes the future. In some ways, we're being reactive but we're also trying to take that future orientation and say, "what can we do now...to try and create change?"

KidsXpress was one of the 2017 Mental Health Month Award winners. Find out more about all the winners online.

If you know of any individuals or organisations doing great work supporting better mental health and wellbeing, [nominate them now](#).

More information about KidsXpress, including referral pathways, is available on their website.

By Tasnim Hossain

Leaders meet in Melbourne to discuss how to help Australians affected by loneliness



Leaders from across a variety of industries and community groups met in Melbourne in early April to discuss how the community can help people living with chronic loneliness. WayAhead Senior Manager Marge Jackson was invited to attend this leadership roundtable event.

“The way that we discussed loneliness during the roundtable was in terms of social connection. We all need social connection, it is a fundamental human need, and loneliness is the feeling that we have when we don’t have that social connection. Usually when we feel lonely then we will do something to make a connection with others, but there are people who live with chronic loneliness and have no way to make a meaningful social connection,” said Ms Jackson.

The leadership roundtable also discussed the differences between being socially isolated and lonely.

“Isolation is a different thing all together. You can still live in a big city, go to an office with lots of people in it every day and feel lonely. If you don’t have good quality connections in your workplace or your community, that’s when the loneliness kicks in,” said Ms Jackson.

The high-risk times for loneliness are during transition periods. For example, when young people graduate school, leave home, start university in a different city not knowing anyone. Another high-risk time is when people lose a partner. “We also know that loneliness can become a habit and people become used to it, which is when it turns into chronic loneliness. In terms of life expectancy, experts compare the effects of loneliness on life expectancy to smoking 15 cigarettes a day,” said Ms Jackson.

Technology also has a role to play in helping overcome loneliness, with apps like MeetUp where people can find activities and events in their local area attended by others looking to meet new people, but technology is also part of the problem.

“Things like Facebook can make people feel very lonely. Some people might have 300 Facebook friends but have no real meaningful social interactions in a day.

“One of the interesting things to me from our leadership discussion was that, we all know people who are lonely, yet we don’t do much about it. So, when people are lonely around us, what are we doing about it? The issue is not just for the people feeling lonely, it’s for everyone interacting with lonely people, how can we empower them to make a meaningful social connection?” said Ms Jackson.

WayAhead believes it is important to be working in loneliness prevention as people living with chronic loneliness don’t always have the resilience, coping mechanisms or social network to manage tough times. One of the best ways to boost resilience is through quality social connectedness.

The leadership group wants to make loneliness a public health issue and groups such as The Coalition Against

Loneliness will continue to meet and raise awareness of chronic loneliness, so meaningful solutions can be established. The group also believes that chronic loneliness needs to start being discussed around board tables, like mental health is.

“The reason why Boards should be discussing this is because the health outcomes for people who are chronically lonely are not good, and that in turn can affect businesses, productivity and ultimately the economy,” said Ms Jackson.

WayAhead advises anyone who feels like they may have chronic loneliness to call our helpline 1300 794 991, and we can put you in contact with community groups in your local area, who can help you break the loneliness cycle.

WayAhead also acknowledges that social anxiety may also be preventing chronically lonely people from seeking help.

“If you have social anxiety, then you can give us a call on our information line and we can take you through what the options are to treat social anxiety. There is a school of thought that if you treat the social anxiety you could stop the loneliness from occurring in the first instance. Another option is attending one of our anxiety support groups, where you can hear from others and know that you are not the only one experiencing the same anxiety in social situations,” said Ms Jackson.

Ms Jackson said that her longer-term hope was for a community which plans for the needs of lonely people and through a variety of measures works to end loneliness.

“In the longer term what we would like to see is that when we are designing our community, part of the planning considerations is, what are we doing here that will make people more or less lonely? I also hope that as human beings we are more compassionate and willing to reach out to each other; we get back to the basics and look out for each other.”

By Ben Graham

Working with local rural and regional communities to prevent suicide



The suicide rate in regional and rural Australia continues to be higher than in capital cities per 100,000 people. Leading the suicide prevention efforts outside of capital cities is the Centre for Rural and Regional Mental Health (CRRMH) which recently published its Rural Suicide and its Prevention: a CRRMH position paper:

“We decided to work on this position paper because we believed that solutions which empowered communities to prevent suicide was something that wasn’t being addressed. When the suicide figures came out in September 2017 they indicated there was a very small decrease in the number of people dying by suicide, which is encouraging, but nonetheless, when the rates are twice the rates of metro areas we can’t ignore it and do nothing,” said CRRMH Director Professor David Perkins.

The position paper is comprised of a range of local prevention strategies; two short term and three medium term.

“The first short-term strategy is to identify people who are having suicidal thoughts and support and encourage them to choose a different pathway, which can include various community pathways and linking in the person’s GP to help address the immediate issue.

“Second is to work with those people who are affected by suicide. They are going through a lot of misery and distress and they are at a high risk of taking their own life. The medium-term objectives are that every community is different, and a local strategy is required,” said Professor Perkins.

Working with younger people in regional and rural areas is also emphasised as a strategy so that schools and other NGOs working with children can build protective factors and resilience in children, so they can identify when something isn’t going right for them or their friends.

“There is very recent evidence that 50% of mental health problems arise by the time you are 15. We need to help young people build resilience and take care of each other,” said Professor Perkins.

The final strategy looks at getting rural and regional communities future ready. “A mining community for instance, will change in the future when the mines become exhausted and people lose their jobs. So how can we develop communities where one industry dies out, another can be created in its place? We need to do this to make sure that rural communities survive. We know that wellbeing is about having a job and a community, we want to work with local communities and councils to make sure that their communities are going well”.

To help spread the message about strategies to prevent rural and regional suicides, the CRRMH is teaming up with the Collective Purpose Partners, WayAhead, NSW Mental Health Carers and Being – Mental Health and Wellbeing Consumer Advisory Group, for the next Collective Purpose Speaker Series in Orange on 12 June.

“If we think that suicide prevention is an issue only for people with a medical background, then we aren’t going

to get very far. We need people who may have a colleague, or a family member that isn't going so well, who can identify self-harm and at-risk behaviour and get these people enabled to have a conversation where they can ask, are you okay? But we need to get them ready to have that conversation.

"We know that when people do have these conversations they are very helpful. We see this as encouraging an active community to prevent suicide and create a community of wellbeing. This is everyone's opportunity, not just medical people," said Professor Perkins.

Professor Perkins added that CRRMH has a service provider postcode locator on its Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) website where if you put your postcode in the locator, you can find a RAMHP Coordinator in your local area. It's their job to link people to link people who are struggling with their mental health to information and appropriate mental health services in their local area. It's a great first step for people who are unsure of what to do and where to go.

You can read CRRMH's full strategy [here](#). More information about the Collective Purpose Speaker Series event in Orange can be found [here](#).

By Ben Graham

Wellbeing in a changing workplace



In the lead up to the [WayAhead Workplaces Annual Members Forum](#) later this month, we spoke to a number of our speakers to ask them about their work, their insights into workplace wellbeing and the most exciting changes to workplace wellbeing.

“When it comes to the work I do with organisations around building a positive culture or boosting workplace wellness, one of the challenges is to get them to see that what they want to achieve requires more than an “event” (e.g. a seminar or workshop); instead, to achieve real and meaningful results, organisations really need to commit to the principles, at all levels, over the long term.”

[Read more from Dr Tim Sharp of The Happiness Institute](#)

“It’s exciting to witness the developments in digital technology and how it’s transforming how we can support mental health in the workplace through early intervention. There’s a huge appetite for combining data and AI to customise content and personalise the employee journey.”

[Read more from Georgie Drury of Springday](#)

“I think there will be increasingly diverse platforms used to promote corporate health and wellbeing. With an increasingly transient and mobile workforce digitalisation will be at the forefront. Face to face delivery should always be an option though, particularly in mental health.”

[Read more from Megan Kingham of Optus](#)

You can hear more from the speakers above and more at the WayAhead Workplaces Annual Members Forum on Friday 22nd of July.

Non-members are welcome to attend; please email workplaces@wayahead.org.au to register your interest.

MAD Pride



WayAhead is this year working with The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference to organise the MAD Pride concert.

The concert is part of the wider MAD Pride consumer movement, which started overseas in the early 1990s. One of the main aims of the movement is to reduce the stigma and discrimination people with a lived experience of mental health issues face in every day society.

“The MAD Pride movement also aims to reclaim the word mad as a self-descriptor. MAD also has different meanings as an acronym, Movement Against Discrimination and Making a Difference are just two. The movement looks at the culture of madness and tries to shift cultural perspectives about it. One of the ways that we here in Australia participate in the movement is through the MAD Pride concert,” said WayAhead Health Promotion Officer Asha Zappa, who is chairing the organising working group.

The MAD Pride concert is an hour and a half showcase of the artistic abilities of people with a lived experience of mental health issues. It follows the consumer and carer day of TheMHS in Adelaide from 28-31 August, with the MAD Pride concert to be held on Tuesday 28 August at the Adelaide Convention Centre starting at 5:00pm. The whole concert is geared towards MAD positivity and MAD pride.

“WayAhead is supporting MAD Pride this year because we believe in it. We want to do something tangible to show our support to end the discrimination of people living with a mental illness or mental health issue. We want to show the wonderful talents that people with a lived experience can do. Their mental health journey is a part of them – but it isn’t all of them and shouldn’t be the only thing that defines them,” said WayAhead CEO Elizabeth Priestley.

Attending the MAD Pride concert is complimentary, and people can register their attendance at the concert on the [TheMHS conference website](#).

By Ben Graham