

Blokes Time Out

Activity Case Study

Blokes Time Out are a group of blokes from across the Wangaratta area who get together once a month to do something social.

They arrange different activities depending on the interests of the group, it could be recreational activities such as a fishing day, darts or pool competition, a BBQ catch-up or going to listen to live music at a local venue.



How it Got Started

Tim, a member of the Rural City of Wangaratta community, started Blokes Time Out because of his own personal experience with mental health issues. He knows how hard it can be and started the group so that other blokes with similar experiences would have someone to talk to, especially when things get tough.

Tim contacted the Grit and Resilience team about his idea, and we helped get it up and going. We talked through how it could work, the kind of things the group might do and how it might attract members. The Grit and Resilience team stays in regular contact with Tim to check in on how things are going and to see what support might be needed.

How the Program Supports the Activity

Blokes Time Out is one of the social groups supported by the Grit and Resilience Program as part of our *Creating Connections* Action Plan.

Creating Connections was selected as a priority area for the Program by the Rural City of Wangaratta community following a Grit and Resilience community survey. Through that survey, the community told us that creating connections with people in the community is vital for good mental health and wellbeing. They also said it was important to have lots of different ways to connect.

The Blokes Time Out group is led by Tim, a volunteer community member. The Program provides administrative support to the group, helps with promotion, and provides funding to cater a group BBQ once every two months while the group is getting established.

The Program also gave Blokes Time Out group members the opportunity to complete a two-day Mental Health First Aid training program to give them the skills and confidence to help someone experiencing a mental health problem.

Participant Experience

We asked participants about the benefits of being involved with Blokes Time Out, here's what they said.

"Getting to meet new people that have mental health challenges every day and that understand what it's like to have mental health concerns without the judgement of others."

"I have met some nice blokes. Others have met people within their community that they did not know. When we catch up, we talk about lots of different stuff - not just our struggles."

"I have enjoyed helping out in my community."

Helpful Hints

If you would like to start something similar, here is some advice from those involved.

Working together to build and sustain Grit and Resilience across the Rural City of Wangaratta community

- ✓ Do things that keep the cost low for the people who are participating.
- ✓ Do some training to make sure that you are supporting people in an appropriate way.
- ✓ Make sure that you pick activities that most people who are in the group would like to do.
- ✓ Keep in contact with the people in the group between get-togethers to remind them of the activity coming up and to remind them that other people are thinking of them.
- ✓ Just do it, it helps in more ways than people realise.