

Mental wellness focus of Project 365

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A GROUP of local musicians who banded together to raise awareness of mental health issues in the community, and to spread the message that 'it's okay to not be okay', will play at the Wangaratta Performing Arts and Convention Centre next month.



The band called U Can Cry, part of the Project 365 initiative, will take to the stage at the Wangaratta Performing Arts and Convention Centre on Saturday, May 7 at 6.30pm and Sunday, May 8 at 2pm.

Project 365 - which has the backing of Wangaratta's Grit and Resilience Program - has pulled together 14 locals with varying degrees of musical experience to create the band.

Since its first rehearsal in May last year, the group has been working towards putting on a stage production at WPACC a year from that first meeting hence the name Project 365.

The project aims to not only give these passionate musicians a creative and social outlet, but to start important conversations in the community about mental health and wellbeing.

It is the brainchild of Wangaratta resident and music lover, Pete Rourke, and emerged from his own mental health challenges.

Pete said since its inception the band had been overwhelmed by support from the public, not only financially, but in terms of morale.

"We have been playing some pop-up gigs, and people are saying to us that this is something that really needs to be spoken about - that if you're not okay, you need to talk about it," he said.

"People have approached various band members to say that they are struggling, and this has made them put their hand up and I'm very proud of that."

Proceeds raised from this performance will be donated to the Into Our Hands Foundation, which invests in projects and initiatives aimed at building the capacity, strength, cohesiveness and wellbeing of communities across North East Victoria.

Ticketing information is available at www.wpacc.com.au/whats-on/u-can-cryproject-365.