

Council plea for grit, resilience money

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FUNDING for the renowned Grit and Resilience Program is due to end in June next year and Rural City of Wangaratta leaders are championing the cause for extra money to perpetuate the life-changing initiative.

Rural City of Wangaratta Mayor Dean Rees, chief executive officer Brendan Mcgrath, and program coordinator Bek Nash-webster visited Canberra recently to discuss the program with the chief of staff for Federal Minister for Health Mark Butler.

Some \$1.2 million was funded by the Federal Government to support the program over three years but that funding will end next June.

“We would like at least the same money again over another three years because we feel the program is building and getting momentum with more programs,” Cr Rees said.

“Grit and Resilience produced Project 365 which now raises its own money to put back into our community towards mental health as well,” Cr Rees said.

Project 365 is a group of members who have all been impacted by mental health or suicide, either through their own experience, or by supporting others on their journey.

With a shared love of music, the group formed a band titled ‘U Can Cry’ and raised \$30,000 from their performance which they donated to Give Wangaratta.

Cr Rees said postvention support for people is a facet the Grit and Resilience Program needs funding support for to assist people living with the impact of suicide.

The program was mentioned as a case study in the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.

It aims to drive positive mental health and wellbeing in the area by supporting the local community to unite, build strength, overcome hardship, and develop courage and a connection with each other.

One of the main components is that the Grit and Resilience is a community-driven initiative, a program coordinated by Ms Nash-webster, through council.

“The groups have funding for whatever activities they want to do, and while we have a project logic that helps groups to map out the project and determine what they hope to see in 12 months’ time, the activities they decide to do within the community is completely up to the community group that will be designing and delivering it,” Ms Nash-webster told the Royal Commission when it visited Wangaratta.

Recent events included the Grit and Resilience Festival that was held earlier this month to coincide with World Mental Health Day.

Other events included Art is in Our Heat workshops in July and September, Mindframe training, Grit and Resilience Heatbeat, and the Winter Solstice.

For more information about the program visit <https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/residents/Grit-resilience>.