

# Rural city shows the way

## Grit and Resilience project a Royal Commission case study

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WANGARATTA'S Grit and Resilience Program featured as a case study in the final report by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, released last week.

As a way forward for the system, the report recommended a community approach to mental health.

This is precisely the aim of the four year Grit and Resilience Program, as it continues through to June, 2023 focusing on understanding and addressing the mental health and wellbeing of Rural City of Wangaratta residents.

As well as the mention as a case study, a number of recommendations made in the Royal Commission's report aligned with the approach being taken by the Grit and Resilience Program, including:

- \* establishing and recurrently funding community collectives for mental health and wellbeing in each local government area; and

- \* the State Government funding each local government to recruit a full time equivalent staff member at the program manager or coordinator level to support the community collectives.

Grit and Resilience Program coordinator Bek Nashwebster and Rural City of Wangaratta director community wellbeing Jaime Chubb both presented to the Royal Commission in the lead-up to its final report.

Ms Nash-webster said the findings validated the direction taken by the local initiative.

"Local communities are best placed to drive priorities in addressing the challenges of mental health," she said.

"On behalf of the Grit and Resilience Program, I welcome the findings and look forward to seeing the community-driven solutions that will now come from municipalities across Victoria.

"I'm really excited that this Grit and Resilience Program that came from the community is being mentioned by the Royal Commission; it makes me even more proud to be part of the Rural City of Wangaratta community.

"We have a really good opportunity to show people how this can be done within their communities, because at the end of these four years, we will essentially have a 'how to' book.

"This is a unique opportunity for Wangaratta."

Cr Ashlee Fitzpatrick helped lobby for funding for the program, and said she was delighted with the recognition Grit and Resilience had received.

"I'm proud of the efforts of everyone who has been involved in the program so far," she said.

"We wanted this program to be something different, and it's great validation that the Royal Commission has endorsed a community-led approach, with local government playing a central role."

Ms Nash-webster said the program, which is currently on the lookout for three new team members, had also attracted 213 volunteers eager to see its priorities activated – evidence of the strong community support for the concept.

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