

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 21 May 2018



New training program supports volunteer wellbeing

Educating volunteers on how to identify, manage and prevent stress and fatigue is critical to ensuring the continued growth of our volunteering workforce.

In 2016, over 43 percent of Australians volunteered which accounts for 932 million volunteering hours and is equivalent to 500,000 full time roles*.

Research indicates volunteering has many benefits however it can lead to stress and fatigue.

The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) have developed a comprehensive training package: 'Volunteer Wellbeing' to be rolled out to organisations during National Volunteer Week (21-27 May). The national theme this year is: Give a little. Change a lot.

The training provides useful tips, videos and facts to help manage and reduce volunteer stress and how to look after your own mental health and wellbeing; as well as others.

RAMHP Coordinators often work with communities facing adversity such as bushfires, floods and drought and are only too aware of the extra challenges and stress that volunteering can bring.

RAMHP Program Manager Tessa Caton said volunteer fatigue can lead to people resenting their committee or their role, not feeling valued, or even disengaging from committee and possibly leaving.

"We know that the further we let stress or fatigue go with no intervention the worse it can become, and the longer it will take to recover.

"It is important to recognise when someone is not coping with their mental health, how to have the conversation and how you can help," said Tessa.

RAMHP Coordinators are encouraging community organisations to provide this 1-hour free training session to their volunteers as part of their duty of care.

To find out more about our training packages or to find a RAMHP Coordinator in your local area, visit ramhp.com.au or email ramhp@newcastle.edu.au



If you have any concerns about yourself or a loved one, please contact the NSW **Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 (free call for landlines)** or call **Lifeline on 13 11 14**.

**Volunteering Australia 2016*

[-ends-](#)

For media enquiries, please contact Communications Coordinator Jocelyn Johnston on 6363 8444.

About RAMHP

The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) is a major program of the University of Newcastle Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, in partnership with each of the rural NSW Health Districts, and is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health. RAMHP works to address the short and long-term mental health needs of rural and remote communities in NSW by linking people to the help they need.

