MEDIA RELEASE

Free comedy shows sharing a story of hope

29 May 2025

People living in Swan Hill and Mildura can attend a free, one-of-a-kind comedy show next month.

Murray PHN is funding two community events to help normalise conversations around mental health and encourage people to seek help earlier.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones acknowledged that men's mental health issues often go unrecognised.

"We know that men are disproportionately represented in suicide statistics and there are a range of barriers that prevent them from seeking support.

"What we need are different approaches so that mental health is recognised as being just as important as physical health.

"Involving those with lived or living experience provides hope, through shared understanding and awareness," Matt said. "Humour can also help to break down barriers."

The free shows are being delivered by South Australian comedian and suicide prevention advocate Marc Ryan, who is also known as 'The Beautiful Bogan' after featuring on ABC's 'You Can't Ask That' Bogans episode - one of the most watched in the series.

Drawing from his own mental health struggles, Marc uses comedy to address the often-taboo subjects of post-traumatic stress disorder, severe anxiety, depression, and living with thoughts of suicide stemming from childhood trauma.

While the topics may seem heavy and could be triggering for some, Marc's performances blend humour with heartfelt stories in the hope of encouraging others to get the help they need and to remind them that they're not alone in their struggles.

Marc says that living with mental illness for more than 27 years has shaped his life.

"I've navigated marriage, fatherhood and fostering children while battling internal struggles.

"By telling my story, I hope to help others understand that mental health is an experience that many of us share.

"It's time we remove the veil of shame and have real conversations to help with the healing.

"We need to be comfortable to talk about the tough stuff because it's real and affects us all," Marc said.

The performance is for audiences MA15+ (parental guidance recommended) due to containing strong language and discussing living with thoughts of suicide.

Event booking details (and registration links):

- Friday 13 June from 6pm | One28 Doors Cafe, Swan Hill
- Sunday 15 June from 6pm | The Setts, Mildura

If you are in an emergency situation or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Other services include Lifeline – 13 13 14 or lifeline.org.au or Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au

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A note for the media:

Evidence suggests that responsible reporting of suicide by the media can reduce suicide rates. There is extensive literature linking media reporting of suicide with increased suicide rates when reports are sensationalised, focus on celebrities, are repeated, or explicitly describe location and method details. See Mindframe Australia Media Guidelines for support to report suicide accurately, responsibly and ethically: https://mindframe.org.au/suicide/communicating-about-suicide/mindframe-guidelines

About Murray PHN:

Murray PHN is one of 29 PHNs (Primary Health Networks) around Australia working to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care and service systems. Across our region, we work with general practitioners (GPs), community health, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), pharmacy, aged care and allied health practitioners, and with acute services such as hospitals, specialists and emergency care.

The role of PHNs is to help to support and integrate the work of these important services to ensure that the people get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. In the Murray PHN region, which covers almost 100,000 sq km of regional Victoria, we work to develop and maintain sustainable models of primary health care for our communities.

About Marc Ryan:

Marc Ryan aka 'The Beautiful Bogan' is one of very few comedians/suicide prevention advocates in Australia. For the last 14 years, he has been performing stand-up comedy around the country and in New Zealand, where he was American comedian Kevin Tate's support act. His strong performances have landed him gigs alongside the likes of Wil Anderson, Adam Hills, Dave Hughes, Fiona O'Laughlin. Last year, his 'Fairy Floss and Chaos Comedy' show received 5 star reviews, "This stand-up comedy was really (and I cannot stress this enough) funny. 10/10" - Dale Anninos-Carter. Many of the shows he's written for The Adelaide fringe festival have also been given 4.5 star reviews.

Murray PHN contact details

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Promotional items

- 42 second video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9q8bQGSvko
- Posters: https://murrayphn.org.au/news/free-comedy-shows-with-a-difference/

  Or email communications@murrayphn.org.au if you require something specific.