



## Regional Australia Bank's recent suicide prevention fundraiser heralded a great success

Regional Australia Bank's recent suicide prevention fundraiser heralded as a great success.

Regional Australia Bank's latest Suicide Prevention Charity Golf Day & Dinner took place on Friday 8th February at Armidale Golf Club, in a move that Regional Australia Bank CEO Kevin Dupé describes as a "significant opportunity to raise awareness of this troubling issue for our regional communities."

The event not only proved invaluable in shining a light on mental health issues and supporting suicide prevention, but it also raised more than \$35,000 towards supporting further research.

Nieves Murray, CEO of Suicide Prevention Australia describes the importance of the bank's latest initiative: "Regional Australia Bank hosted the golf day to support the National Suicide Prevention research fund. The fund has been developed because while we know a lot about the risks relating to why people take their own lives, we don't currently have enough evidence about what actually works and why."

"Suicide is such a complex behavior that what helps one person may not necessarily help another, so the research fund will look at the strategic priorities for where we should be focusing our investment."

With last year's suicide statistics rising to a total of 3,128, that's more than 8 people per day taking their own lives. Suicide remains the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15-44 and as Nieves explains, it's an issue that can have a drastic impact in more ways than expected:

"One of the critical factors that's only recently come to light is that for every suicide, around 135 people are impacted. This means that around 8,000 people every week face the tragedy of suicide," she says.

The Bank's charity initiative saw 136 golfers of all abilities compete in a day on the course, followed by a gala dinner marked by a variety of auctions, raffles, and prizes. The golfers were joined by special guests including; rugby league great Laurie Daley, sports commentator and Sky Sports Radio host, Terry Kennedy and Suicide Prevention Australia Quality and Innovation Director, Julie Heraghty.

The fortunate winners of the evening's main prize draw included Dean Semchshym who took home a bottle of Penfolds Grange Hermitage while Scott Waterson, Angus Archer, Craig Morgan and Angus Monie scored a six-day pass for four people to the 2019 Presidents Cup at Royal Melbourne Golf Club including a \$2,000 flight voucher and \$2,000 accommodation voucher.

Regional Australia Bank also provides much needed funding support to Suicide Prevention Australia's Higher Degree Research Scholarships, with the first six scholarship recipients recently announced. Katie McGill from the University of Newcastle has been named as Regional Australia Bank's scholarship recipient of \$105,000 in funding to help her undertake new research into suicide prevention.

Kevin Dupé describes suicide prevention as a particularly worthwhile cause. "Sadly, we all too often hear of regional Australians taking their own lives, and with suicide stats again rising this year, we're determined to face the issue head on and find new ways to address it."

"Helping with Katie's research is just one part of a bigger program we are embarking on to integrate mental health into our business. We have committed to five key pillars that we hope will help tackle the disproportionate rates of self-harm and mental health issues in regional Australia. These include, education and training, philanthropy, strategic partnerships, research and importantly being advocates for more mental health services in regional Australia," Kevin reports.

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Editor's Note:

It is requested that Regional Australia Bank is not shorted to an acronym and always referred to in full as Regional Australia Bank. Image (L-R)

Sky Sports Radio host, Terry Kennedy Regional Australia Bank's scholarship recipient, Katie McGill Suicide Prevention Australia Quality and Innovation Director, Julie Heraghty Regional Australia Bank CEO, Kevin Dupe Rugby league great, Laurie Daley

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