

5 June 2018

LOCAL GRANTS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL CONNECTION AND TACKLE LONELINESS IN BAYSIDE COMMUNITY

Twenty new local projects are set to take action to address the risk of loneliness and social isolation in the Bayside community after receiving a 'Doing it Differently' (DID) grant.

Following the success of the inaugural initiative in 2017, the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) and Bayside Council have again partnered to offer the grants, awarding up to \$10,000 to individuals and community groups to facilitate opportunities for people to connect, belong, take part, engage, feel useful and have something to look forward to.

The rising rate of loneliness and its link to poor health is increasingly being acknowledged as an epidemic where people affected are at a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression, anxiety and premature death.

In the Bayside Local Government Area, one in five households are occupied by a single resident, and recent research suggests this increases the likelihood of those individuals experiencing feelings of loneliness.

An official awards ceremony was held at Rockdale Library on Tuesday 5 June, attended by grant recipients, Julie Dixon, SESLHD Director Planning, Population Health & Equity and Bayside General Manager, Meredith Wallace.

All projects funded aim to increase social connection and reduce loneliness through activities that range from senior's choirs to youth focused programs, and women's DIY sheds.

Gerry Marr, SESLHD Chief Executive, said the initiative was inspired by an innovative approach which recognises that alongside healthcare professionals, local communities are active and equal partners to create effective solutions to improve health and wellbeing.

"The Doing it Differently grants are an example of how we can successfully build on the strengths and resources that already exist within the community to generate positive health outcomes, Mr Marr said.

The Mayor of Bayside, Bill Saravinovski, said that successful grant applications demonstrated the potential to enhance environments, civic engagement and trust, as well as increase social connection, promote community spirit and inspire pride within local neighbourhoods.

"Evidence suggests these are key ingredients to making both individuals and communities productive, healthy and safe.

"To work collaboratively with the health sector has been a valuable opportunity to give our diverse, talented and passionate community an opportunity to have a voice in their future.

We know that the community is best placed to identify factors that determine their wellbeing, and we are pleased to be part of this initiative with SESLHD,” Mayor Saravinovski said.

The DID application process involved completing a simple one page form and presenting to the judging panel at a ‘Pitch Your Project Night’.

In 2017, the funded projects reached approximately 10,000 local residents, and participants reported significant improvements in health and wellbeing.

For more information, please visit: <https://haveyoursay.bayside.nsw.gov.au/doing-it-differently-grants-program>

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