



Men's Wellbeing Matters

Promoting good health and wellbeing for men on the Mornington Peninsula

Winter 2009

www.menswellbeingmatters.com.au

Aussie rock legends speak about their health

Australian entertainment industry icons Normie Rowe, Jim Keays and Mike Brady featured in MWM's Aussie Rock Legends Talk Men's Health event at Arthurs Seat during International Men's Health Week.

The legendary rock stars engaged the capacity audience with stories about their personal health. Each highlighted the importance of regular health checks with a GP, counselling and the support of family and friends.

The Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AM, the Patron of Men's Wellbeing Matters, was a special guest at the not-for-profit event and outlined the current state of men's health in Australia.

Professor de Kretser is an internationally recognised men's health researcher and a strong advocate for men's health.

The event was hosted by well-known musician and actor Wilbur Wilde who had the audience in stitches with his humorous anecdotes and quick quips.

Local country rock band The Distance provided music before and during dinner.

The spirited audience sang along enthusiastically to Mike Brady's rendition of Up There Cazaly.

When the entertainers (pictured right) combined at the end for a jam session to perform Normie's '60s hit Shakin' All Over and Jim Keays' Turn Up Your Radio audience delight peaked.

Registrations for the event closed after only two weeks, but a further 300 requests for tickets were received suggesting that an audience of 500 - 600 could have been achieved easily at a bigger venue.

The organisers, however, felt that the personal nature of the health stories presented by the speakers lent itself to a more intimate venue.

MWM will give consideration to running a similar event when resources permit.



Jamming with Normie, Jim, Mike and Wilbur

The Commish on men's wellbeing

Capping off a big week of events for Men's Wellbeing Matters during International Men's Health Week, Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Simon Overland spoke about important issues in men's wellbeing over breakfast at Mornington Racecourse.

Simon maintained that there are three crucial areas which influence a man's health and wellbeing – family and friends, work and the man himself.

He said that taking personal responsibility for their health was where most men struggled and they needed to put in a much better effort including developing fitness and stress management strategies.

Simon impressed the large audience with his personal candour and in-depth understanding of the issues.



Simon Overland with Ted Kay, Greg Holding and host Tracee Hutchison

Post-traumatic stress disorder

The psychological aftermath of the recent Victorian bushfires will be long lasting for many people who were involved closely with the tragic events.

Survivors of the fires, including those who suffered injuries, lost loved ones, close friends and neighbours, the firefighters, police and a wide range of other people who were involved are likely to suffer various kinds of stress disorder.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, often referred to as PTSD, is an emotional illness that results from people having fear-provoking, life-threatening or extremely unsafe experiences.

Soldiers returning from active service have brought the condition to greater prominence in recent times, especially Vietnam War veterans. Previously, soldiers suffering from the condition were said to be suffering from 'shell shock' or 'combat fatigue'.

It has only been over the last 25 years or so that the diagnosis of 'post-traumatic stress disorder' has existed.

Survivors of motor vehicle accidents, crime (especially violent crime), terrorist attacks, natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and other catastrophic events can result in PTSD.

The symptoms of PTSD can include:

- Event flashbacks
- Detachment
- Depression
- Sleep disturbances
- Nightmares
- Impaired functioning
- Memory disturbances
- Marriage/parenting problems
- Job instability

The symptoms of PTSD can last for weeks, months or even years.

Treatments for PTSD include psychological and medical support such as counselling and medication.

Making an appointment with a GP is a good early step in addressing post-traumatic stress disorder. If required, they can make a referral to a local counsellor and/or prescribe medication.



4 Corners films at MWM event

The ABC's 4 Corners program has filmed one of MWM's recent events.

The event, which focused on the risks to children posed by the Internet, was held at Hickinbotham of Dromana on 7th March and featured child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg.

On 6th April 4 Corners aired The Bullies' Playground and beforehand was keen to interview Dr Carr-Gregg and his co-presenter at the MWM event, Susan McLean, on the topic of bullying.

Dr Carr-Gregg is a recognized authority on bullying and Susan McLean is an authority on the topic of the Internet and the risks it can pose for children, including cyber bullying.

For 15 years Susan was employed by the Victoria Police in the area of cyber crime.

MWM audiences are no strangers to film crews as most of MWM's events over the last 18 months have been captured on film by commercial filmmaker Tribal Media Makers.

One of the principals of the company, Sharon Maloney, is a strong supporter of the work of MWM and is keen to see the MWM concept developed Australia wide.

In the first instance, however, MWM plans to produce a short promotional DVD to complement the group's local public relations and fundraising efforts.

Later, when funding permits, footage from some of MWM's events will be incorporated into a series of educational DVDs which will be available to men and their families.

Committee member profile

Dr Mark Sujecki is a local GP and the Vice-Chairman of Men's Wellbeing Matters.

Mark (pictured right) is based in Mt Martha and is one of the principals of Mt Martha Village Clinic.

He is also on the Board of the Peninsula GP Network.

Mark graduated from Monash University in 1986 and then worked in the UK, Africa and outback Australia before settling into general practice in Mt Martha.

His interests are reflected in his work as he is involved in travel medicine, paediatrics and men's health.

Mark's hobbies are cycling, surfing and snowboarding.

A new interest is sailing in which the whole family participates.

Mark is a valued member of the Men's Wellbeing Matters committee of management and brings with him a wealth of medical and life experience to the work of the group.



Volunteering and good health

Recent research has revealed that volunteering can bring a wide range of health benefits to individuals and their communities.

People who volunteer can live longer, have greater physical and mental functioning and experience lower rates of depression later in life.

The research suggests that older people receive greater benefits because they are facing an increased risk of illness and volunteering provides them with physical and social activities and a sense of purpose at a time when their social roles, particularly as workers and parents, are changing.

Some of the research indicates that the people who volunteer at least a couple of hours weekly are the ones mostly likely to benefit health wise.

Volunteer activities can strengthen people's social support networks preventing them from becoming isolated and lonely. Loneliness can lead to a deterioration of mental and physical health.

People with strong support networks often are able to cope better during difficult times.

Additionally, the experience of helping others through volunteering can lead to a greater sense of self worth which can be a contributor to psychological and physical good health.

The research shows also that often the strongest and most resilient communities are those where many people are involved regularly with local community groups as volunteers.

There are lots of opportunities to volunteer in the community and most people will be able to find involvement which suits their particular interests and experience.

Contact Men's Wellbeing Matters (details back page) for more information about volunteering.



Neighborhood efforts important

Neighborhood groups such as Men's Wellbeing Matters which have their origins among concerned and committed local people can play an important role in addressing community problems.

Often, however, the role of neighborhood or grass-roots groups is overlooked by governments because it is simpler to support a smaller number of bigger organisations than it is to support a plethora of small neighborhood groups.

MWM was formed because of the perceived lack of commitment of governments and mainstream health and welfare services to men's health and wellbeing on the Mornington Peninsula.

Most members of the committee of management of MWM are long-term residents of the Peninsula and know their community well.

Previous to their involvement with MWM, each had displayed a strong commitment to addressing local social, environmental, cultural and economic problems as volunteers and through their professional work.

While governments change regularly as do their politicians, policies, programs and workers, it is the people who live long-term in a community who are best placed to make a sustainable commitment to addressing local issues and problems. Many community problems require more than just one-off and short-term efforts to resolve.

There are many volunteer groups on the Peninsula whose members have been committed for 20 years or more to making their community a better place to live.

Part of MWM's role is to advocate for support for the grass roots sector so that it can have greater involvement in addressing men's health issues.

MWM contributed to the recent Federal Government Senate Report on Men's Health highlighting that neighborhood groups can work successfully in the area of men's health promotion and education.

These groups would be able to do more, however, if they were supported by governments.

Prostate cancer not a death sentence

Prostate cancer need not be fatal if discovered early.

Each year in Australia around 3000 men die of prostate cancer which exceeds the number of women who die from breast cancer annually. More than 18,000 new cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed in Australian every year.

While prostate cancer is most common in men over the age of 50, younger men with a history of prostate cancer in their families are at greater risk.

Prostate cancer can be treated successfully if detected early enough, especially when the cancer is still confined to the prostate gland.

However, prostate cancer rarely has symptoms at the time it is diagnosed.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia recommends that men at 50 with no family history of prostate cancer, and men at 40 with a family history, should seek voluntary annual testing for prostate cancer.

According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, testing through a blood test - the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) or DRE (digital rectal examination) offers the best opportunity to determine the presence of cancer.

For more detailed information contact your GP and visit the following websites:

www.prostate.org.au

www.prostatehealth.org.au

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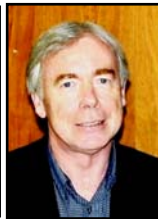
The Committee



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Dr Mark Sujeci
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Dr John Murphy
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Andrew
Hickinbotham



Stuart Marshall



Normie Rowe AM



Ted Kay



Joe Cauchi

The aim of Men's Wellbeing Matters is to make a major contribution to the wellbeing of men and their families on the Mornington Peninsula.

MWM will achieve its aim by undertaking community strengthening, health promotion and education activities in partnership with others who are interested in men's health and wellbeing.

While 'health and wellbeing' usually refer to physical and mental health, MWM's priorities are based on a more holistic approach and are interested in how men are coping in a range of areas of their lives such as family, education, employment, income, housing, sport, recreation and community.

MWM was formed in November 2007 by a group of professional men concerned about the state of men's health on the Mornington Peninsula.

Members of the committee undertake their work for MWM mostly on a voluntary or pro bono basis and pursue funding for events and activities on a project-by-project basis.

Two old blokes

