

Wednesday, 3 February 2021

## Farmers Health Clinics Kick Off

After a delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Northern District Community Health (NDCH) are starting a new free farmers health service in the Gannawarra Shire. The AgriSafe™ Farmer Health Clinics are a preventative health program in affiliation with The National Centre for Farmer Health. The program is open to any person over 18 working within the Agricultural Industry. The 90 minute appointments for farming people are run by an accredited AgriSafe™ Clinician to:

- Prevent and identify risk factors for non-communicable diseases
- Support early intervention for any physical and mental health risk factors
- Increase community awareness of the importance of farmer & rural health, and
- Promote available support & referral pathways to make ongoing access easier

NDCH received funding through the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Small and Vital Grants as well as through the Gannawarra Shire Council's Drought Communities Programme – Extension. The funding helped set up the program with essential equipment.

“The goal of the program is to improve health, wellbeing and safety for our farmers, their employees and families,” NDCH CEO Mandy Hutchinson said. The Farmer Health Clinics are part of the Victorian Government's Smarter Safer Farms Program, which is a \$10 million 4-year initiative focused on farming safety and wellbeing.

“Across Australia 27% of all workplace fatalities occur in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries,” NDCH Community Health Nurse and AgriSafe™ Accredited Clinician Rosi Bear said. “Yet those industries make up less than 3% of the total workforce.” Mrs. Bear said that research and hospital data shows that farming populations have higher rates of preventable conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, some cancers, and mental illness. She added that agricultural workers experience hearing loss 15 years earlier than that of the general population.

Anyone working in farming across the Gannawarra Shire interested in the clinics can contact NDCH on 54510200. The Clinics will be held at Cohuna and Kerang NDCH sites.

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Media Enquiries

Rosi Bear, NDCH Community Health Nurse and Accredited AgriSafe™ Clinician - (03) 5451 0200.