



# Better mental health for teens

Glen Eira City Council is seeking a partnership with the State Government to deliver a *Teen Mental Health First Aid Program* for Year 10 students attending secondary schools in Glen Eira.

## SUPPORT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Adolescence and young adulthood is a significant period of transition in a person's life. More than 75 per cent of mental health issues develop before a person turns 25.

Mental health challenges that emerge during the formative years of adolescence can have a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of the individual and on the lives of those around them. Mental health issues for young people can include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, trauma, self-harm, psychosis and substance use disorders.

As part of the new *Glen Eira Youth Strategy 2019–2023*, Council is partnering with Mental Health First Aid Australia to trial the delivery of *Teen Mental Health First Aid* to local Year 10 students at 15 secondary schools in Glen Eira.

A distressing event or ongoing challenges can mean big changes for young people. Parents and carers may also be struggling with stress or grief, which can make it difficult to support their child. When this is the case, it's important for young people to have the knowledge and confidence to seek support from friends, school staff or health professionals.

The ability to manage worry and stress and remain confident is pivotal to maintaining good mental health and includes sleeping well, eating well, exercise and staying away from unhealthy substances. Educating young people about mental health, the risk factors, signs, symptoms and where to seek support is critical and this is driving a heavy burden of risk onto schools.

*Teen Mental Health First Aid* is a practical, evidence-based tool that provides young people with the skills and confidence to support one another and reduces the stigma around help seeking behaviours.

The program equips young people with valuable information about how to:

- help other young people in the early stages of mental health problems;
- recognise the signs and symptoms of these problems;
- get help from local service providers and support agencies; and
- understand what types of help are effective.

## FACTS

Youth suicide affects families every day in Australia. It is the leading cause of death among young people. Research shows that for every one youth suicide there are approximately 100 to 200 suicide attempts.

A 2014 evaluation study by the Centre for Mental Health at The University of Melbourne showed that

students who undertook *Teen Mental Health First Aid* training increased their confidence in helping a peer with a mental illness; increased their willingness to tell someone about a mental health problem and decreased stigma towards people with mental illness.

Council's Youth Services located in Bentleigh provides one-on-one support and referral for young people across a range of issues affecting young people including mental health, drug and alcohol issues, financial problems, relationship issues, housing and domestic and family violence. The Youth Service provides services to approximately 8,000 young people each year.

In 2017, Council partnered with Youth Resilience Australia Inc. to deliver a *Student Resilience Survey* across all Glen Eira primary and secondary schools for students from years 3 to 12. A total of 4,350 students from 21 schools took part in the survey. The survey found that 30 per cent of respondents reported being constantly under strain, losing sleep through worry and struggling with problem solving.

## THE ASK

Council is seeking a \$200,000 investment from the State Government to roll out the *Teen Mental Health First Aid Program* to Year 10 students in all 15 secondary schools in Glen Eira.

Council has the capacity to co-ordinate the delivery of the *Teen Mental Health First Aid* course and offer the *Program* to all secondary schools in Glen Eira over a two year period.

The funding will also provide *Youth Mental Health First Aid* training to a minimum of 10 per cent of teaching staff for each participating secondary school.

## COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The *Program* will reduce stigmatising attitudes towards mental health, increase levels of peer support and increase the confidence in young people to access support.

The *Program* will also bring Council and local schools together in an effective partnership to improve mental health outcomes for young people that live, work and study in Glen Eira.

Strengthening the resilience of our young people will increase how motivated and engaged they are in learning, how supported they feel in their community and how prepared they are to take on life's inevitable challenges.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Advocacy — Glen Eira City Council**

(03) 9524 3333

Email: [advocacy@gleneira.vic.gov.au](mailto:advocacy@gleneira.vic.gov.au)

