

NEWSLETTER

April 2022, Volume 2, Issue 1



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Hello from the new Chair

You would be aware, if you've read a recent edition of the Mail, that Martin Ringer is now enjoying some well earned rest and relaxation in France.

Whilst Martin's are big shoes to fill, I am up to the challenge and looking forward to seeing Mindful Margaret River consolidate its position in the future as an integral part of our Margaret River community.

Right now, I know some of you will be going through some strange times and having to endure isolation and, in many cases, more than one seven day period.

Having completed two weeks of isolation just over 12 months ago, I know how much I missed everyday contact with other human beings. Grocery deliveries and friends dropping other supplies off from a distance just don't cut it. Neither does being active on emails, social media or Zoom.

There is nothing like a visit to the post office or the supermarket, where we will see half a dozen people with whom we can, at the very least, share a smile or a few words. The physical process of moving the mouth into a smile, or a laugh, or to speak affects our whole wellbeing. Not doing that for seven days or more is not only difficult, but can be like experiencing the discomfort of suddenly being left on your own.

Continued page 3



Marilyn Hopkins, Chair

ALL ABOUT US – A LOOK AT THE LAST 12 MONTHS

WHO WE ARE

A group of **local volunteers**.

Our membership grew to 89 individuals from 45 in the last nine months



Nine distinct volunteer working groups. Each of the nine groups **work on local actions** to improve the wellbeing of our community.

See the 9 Team summaries in this newsletter for more information

TOGETHER WE HAVE

Run **welbeing workshops** for over 100 front line health staff, support workers, GPs, parents, teachers, counsellors and community members

Run **six accredited mental health first aid courses** attend by over 80 local community members now trained to respond to a mental health crisis



Facilitated an **RUOK day** workshop for over 200 local employees in their work place

Worked hard to support the establishment of a **perinatal peer support** group in Margaret River with RADIANCE

WE COLLABORATE TO CREATE

A **youth focused collective** to address mental health and wellbeing. We collaborate to address current gaps.

An **evidence based website** with local help seeking information, events, and training.

We work with local community members to establish **local peer support groups** for women that have experienced family and domestic violence

A help seeking narrative through sharing **local lived experiences** and help seeking in partnership with the MAIL, Radio Margaret River and others! Over 35+ articles and counting!



Promoting Wellbeing

Promoting wellbeing messages and information (Team 1)

The Mindful Margaret River Website is going strong. On our site you can find information about local training, upcoming events in our community, local contacts for help and ways to connect and participate. Please share this resource with friends and family. Currently, our help pages include local help for the following areas: Feeling blue. Emergency, Alcohol-drugs-gambling, Wellbeing, Suicide, Youth, Domestic Violence, Housing, Legal support, LGBTQIA+, Money worries, Local GPs, Bushfires and mental health, COVID and Families.

This site and the information will continue to change and grow. If you have suggestions, comments or ideas, please contact [Erin Statz](#) today.

We are confident that this website is being well utilised. Current statistics show that the pages on **Suicide** are most visited while the **Domestic Violence Toolkit** is the most downloaded from the site.

Supporting our website is our [Facebook page](#). We use this platform to connect with a wider audience. The Facebook page focuses on providing a wide array of information in relation to help and help seeking supports. We reference evidence based sites and well researched articles alongside our own unique posts focused on educating our community on local help. Since November 2021 our local posts on information continue to be most popular in interactions and sharing.

Most viewed: Tips for managing end of year stress (1,895)
followed closely by:
Bushfires and mental health (1,584)

Our Mail articles are going strong. If you want to catch up, you can see all our past articles on our website under NEWS.

The partnership with the MAIL has resulted in one of the most loved and well read columns in the local paper.

Feedback from the MAIL is that this series is one of the most loved and most read in the paper. Your contributions make this possible. If you are interested in writing an article, please contact Erin Statz today for more information.

Email: erin@mindfulmargaretriver.org.au
Phone: 0448 760 737



continued from page 1

Hello from the new Chair

Human connection is so important for our mental wellbeing and we often only realise that when we are deprived of it. The message Act, Belong, Commit never had more meaning than when we are prevented from acting, belonging and committing in the way we are used to.

Mindful Margaret River continues to introduce or support initiatives which will fit around the lives of our members and the community. We do not expect our community to have to bend to our program. We will adapt and take an agile approach, scaling back activities or making them sufficiently flexible to suit various challenges as they arise.

I hope the pages of this newsletter will inspire you to stay involved in our community, to act and to feel that sense of belonging and commitment we all need.

Did you know about the Mindful Margaret River Podcast series?



Bill Bunbury interviews local people about how they keep going when times are trying. Bill's guests find meaning and satisfaction in their lives in different ways including creating and retaining friendships, helping others in need, and exploring our beautiful environment.

You can listen to the podcasts anytime by visiting either the Radio Margaret River website or the Mindful Margaret River site.

This partnership is another way MMR is working to promote messages of wellbeing and destigmatise help seeking behaviour.

Online at mindfulmargaretriver.org.au/blog or radiomargaretriver.com under podcasts

Website: mindfulmargaretriver.org.au/news
Facebook: facebook.com/mindfulmargaretriver/

Increasing Community Awareness

Increase community awareness of local support services and ways to be connected (Team 2)

During our recent bushfires (December 2021), Mindful Margaret River worked closely with the Shire to provide up to date information on available local support as well as volunteer mental health first aiders at the evacuation centre. Whether you were impacted directly in recent events, witnessed them or even watched them on the news, it is normal to experience a range of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that can be intense, confusing and frightening.

After a bushfire, many people deal with memories and ongoing feelings by drawing on their own strengths, as well as the support of others, and will gradually move on with their lives and achieve a sense of wellbeing again.

However, it is also common to have negative feelings and thoughts that result from a bushfire or memories that they bring up as it reminds community of earlier traumatic experiences and loss. Mindful Margaret River continues to work with community to support and promote local services and supports as well as ways to become and remain connected to community.

Did you know that there is a specific bushfire line you can call if you are feeling distressed after experiencing bush fire trauma?

Available 24/7 people are ready to listen and help 13 HELP (13 43 57)

Volunteers from this team are available to come and talk with local clubs, employers and community groups wanting to increase their own understanding of local supports and ways to support others in the community. This is not formal training. It is to start the conversation in your workplace, club, community group.

If you know of a work place or community group that is interested in learning more about wellbeing, when and where to get local help and support, email us today at: info@mindfulmargaretriver.org.au

If you want to do Mental Health First Aid training, see Team 3 below.

Building Capacity

Build community capacity for better wellbeing and mental health (Team 3)

This team is focused on building partnerships to support training in Margaret River.

UPCOMING TRAINING - All our training is listed on the MMR website under **EVENTS**.

Conversations about suicide - half day course

Margaret River, 9 May, 9am - 1pm (\$80-100)

Non-suicidal self-injury - half day course

Margaret River, 9 May, 1.30pm-5.30pm (\$80-100)

Mental Health First Aid Training - 2 day course

Bunbury, 9-10 May, 9am-4.30pm (

\$55 normally \$250, subsidised by the Mental Health Commission)

Gatekeeper suicide prevention training - 2 day course

Bunbury, 27-28 June, 9am - 5pm (FREE)

Gatekeeper suicide prevention training - 2 day course

Busselton, 30 June - 1 July, 9am - 5pm (FREE)



Please encourage your friends and family members. This training is for everyone and anyone.

Mental health first aid could make in their life and those of their loved ones.

Support for Sporting Clubs

Support sporting clubs to incorporate mental health, alcohol and other drug messaging (Team 4)

In the Augusta Margaret River Shire, being part of a sporting club is one of the best ways to try something new, make local connections and get fit. The physical benefits of participating in sport is well known. But did you know that physical activity can increase self-esteem and reduce depression and anxiety in children (1). We also know that physical activity performed in an outdoor space can improve cognitive performance, self-esteem and reduce anxiety (2).

Mindful Margaret River is looking forward to the resurrection of the Sport and Recreation Group (SRG) after a long COVID hiatus. Upcoming get togethers will give sports clubs the chance to meet up, share ideas, resources, plans for the future as well as building connections, community and resilience. Mental health awareness within sporting clubs often only comes after a tragedy as running a volunteer club takes a lot of time and energy. Mindful Margaret River is looking forward to becoming part of the SRG to build connections with clubs interested accessing mental health training, activities or even partnering in community events. If you want to join this volunteer team, contact [Erin Statz](#) today.

1. Biddle SJ, Asare M. Physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents: a review of reviews. *Br J Sports Med.* 2011;45(11):886-95.
2. WOOLEY H, PATTACINI L, SOMERSET-WARD A. Children and the natural environment: experiences, influences and interventions - Summary. *Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number 026.2009.*

Ecohealth - Nature Nurture

Support the Ecohealth pilot program to increase mental health and wellbeing of youth (Team 5)

The aim of the Margaret River Ecohealth program, piloted in 2021, was to improve the mental wellbeing of young people involved by engaging them in nature-based regeneration and other nature-based activities. Targeting students at Margaret River Senior High School (MRSHS), it sought to:

- Increase personal resilience
- Reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Improve behaviour and increase engagement within the school environment
- Create a sense of personal agency in addressing issues such as climate change and by so doing, engender greater hope for their future, and
- Fulfil this age group's need for social connection.

A study was undertaken by researchers from UWA Psychology department to evaluate the initial, pilot phase of the Margaret River program. In particular, it aimed to gauge the implementation and acceptability of the program's ecological regeneration activities amongst participating students. In addition to evaluating the feasibility of incorporating standard mental health and wellbeing assessment instruments, this study was also designed to capture students' perspectives and experiences to provide insights that would support the program's continued development and improvement.

The findings from the UWA evaluation study suggest that, overall, students enjoyed and gained benefits from their participation in the Ecohealth program. There was evidence that the program had enabled them to develop a greater connection with nature and had led to a greater appreciation of the actions they could take to conserve their local environment. This study also found evidence that the program had positive effect on their mental wellbeing, with students' symptoms of social anxiety decreasing over the course of the program.

Students' description of their Ecohealth experiences suggests they found the program's regenerative work challenging but also rewarding, with some expressing great satisfaction in having created 'a whole forest' that would be around for years to come. Students also enjoyed the variety of speakers and activities in the afternoon sessions, particularly those which had exposed them to Indigenous culture and which were viewed as being more practical or 'hands-on'.

Sadly, due to COVID challenges to the recruiting of students the 2022 program has needed to be postponed until 2023. The program developers will be working with the high school to ensure that Margaret River students again have the opportunity to participate in this ground breaking program.

Suzanne Hicks, with acknowledgement to UWA Psychology researcher Jo Watson for summary of program benefits.

To build strong relationships to increase youth connectedness and resilience (Team 6)

When you think of youth in our community, what do you think of?

Do you wonder how COVID has impacted their mental health and views of the future?

Do you wonder how they are learning about important issues like consent, identity, grief and suicide?

Do you wonder as a parent/worker/teacher/friend where to get some help for someone you are worried about?

Team 6 is focused on bringing together key services, contacts, supports and groups that work with youth in our community. This group of volunteers had their first meet up of the year with the goal of connecting and meeting others in the field and to identify exactly WHAT is available to youth right here, right now.

What is available to youth in our community?

The goal for this group of volunteers and stakeholders is to become more aware of when, where, and how to connect to and get help as well as what is on offer for young people to build connections.

From this meeting we have been able to pull together the following resource:

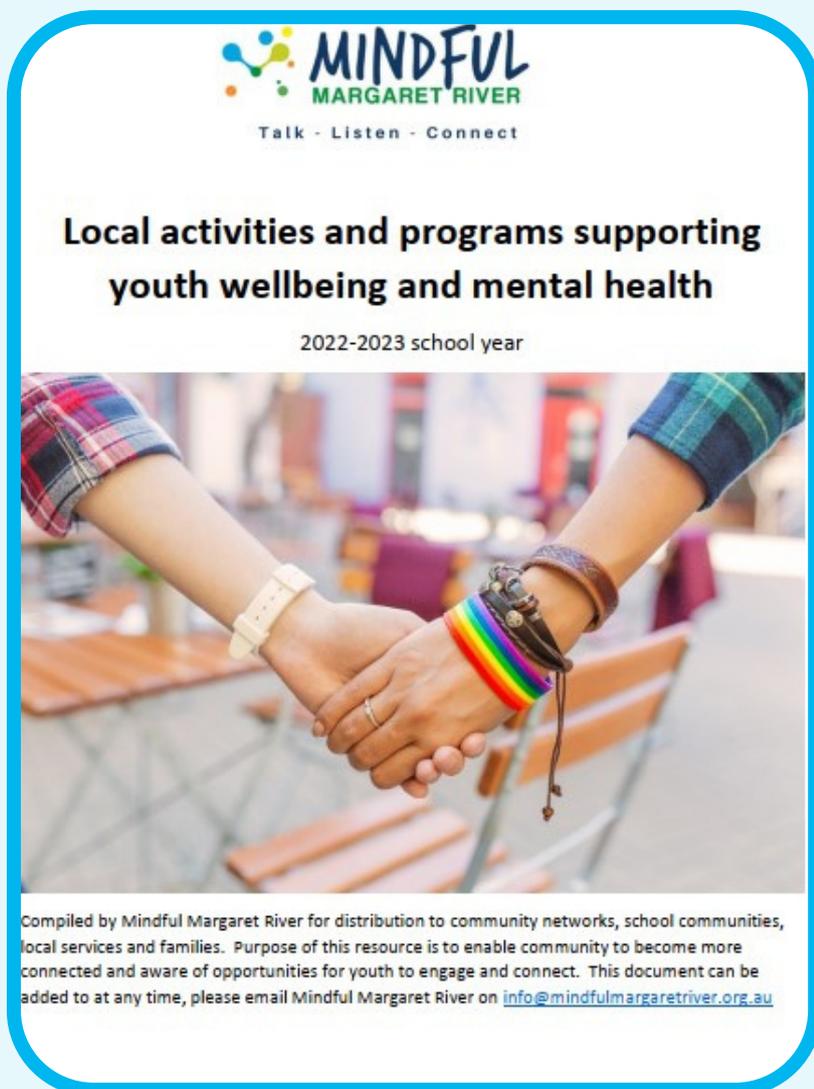
Local activities and programs supporting youth wellbeing and mental health.

This is available on our website and we encourage people to share this information with anyone that has a young person in their life. Likewise, feel free to contact us with more information as we want this resource to continue to grow.

From this meeting, we have been able to start to join the dots between different stakeholders with mutual goals looking to address some of the gaps locally and collaboratively.

If you have any feedback on this document, please contact us on info@mindfulmargaretriver.org.au

You can also email us to get the most up to date copy of this document.



Isolation and Men's Groups

Support the wellbeing and mental health of isolated and hard to engage community members through connection (Team 7)

LISTEN UP - How can us blokes be better understood, a short workshop for small groups of men has been developed by two volunteers in Team 7 focusing specifically on older isolated men in our community via the Men's Sheds.

Listen Up is a two hour workshop with information and discussion, the purpose of which is to;

- Provide some understanding and skills to improve communication and connection with others
- Show that there are benefits of this approach on your health and wellbeing
- To help improve relationships
- Help observe and deal with emotional issues in another person

It works on the analogy of it is better to understand how your car engine works, not only to deal with any breakdown but also with the smooth running of the motor.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Team 7 identified a **blokes night** as one of the goals for their plan. The Barbarians Group in Perth have offered to provide a **free Blokes Night workshop in Margaret River** if there is interest. What is needed is a **volunteer to lead this event planning**. If you would like to work on this project, please contact [MMR](#) to get involved today.

In November 2021, over 60 community members including GPs, counsellors, pharmacy personnel, carers, community members and MMR volunteers attended a facilitated panel discussion led by Dr Peter Durey called **Caring through Connecting**. This workshop was for anyone interested in the foundations of effective communication, the value of listening and the importance in self-awareness and self-care when working with others. An evaluation of the event confirmed ongoing support and interest in communication, connection in relation to the wellbeing and mental health of our community.



Debbie George, Geoff Riley, Martin Ringer, Peter Durey and Robyn Gibson
Caring Through Connecting event

Family and Domestic Violence

Support and resources for family and domestic violence local initiatives (Team 8)

Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) is a global issue that is now significantly discussed. However, we tend to think it never happens near us or will never happen to us. Unfortunately, FDV is a reality for many people, and although not solely against women, women are overly and disproportionately affected by abusive or violent partners.

FDV exists in Margaret River. Unfortunately, it has been increasing at an alarming rate. Mindful Margaret River is committed to supporting the emergence of various groups and projects that can help families affected by FDV and increase awareness and readiness to support.

Peer support groups:

Women require assistance both during a crisis and in recovery. The effect of abuse, coercion, or violence is long-lasting and traumatic. Mindful Margaret River currently supports two groups in the formation stage for women to access that invaluable peer support.

Exploring new responses to family domestic violence:

We often talk about the abuse but fail to address a more significant issue: what happens to women when they must escape? Women are more vulnerable and exposed to homelessness and financial hardship after escaping a violent or abusive relationship. Not only are they moving away from their home, but they also lose their social network and connection with their community, which both play fundamental roles in recovery. In partnership with local WA Police, Mindful Margaret River is exploring a different way to respond to FDV. A small volunteer sub group is exploring the option of a local perpetrators accommodation model. This involves the temporary removal of the perpetrator to voluntary local temporary accommodation. This project is being carefully considered and explored with a number of key stakeholders and MMR volunteers with experience in the FDV sector. More to come soon.

Advocacy, awareness, and education:

Two projects are underway to improve education and community awareness regarding family and domestic violence. The first one aims to spread a better knowledge of services, resources, or hotlines about what to do for oneself or someone we know who may be going through abuse.

The second one will be a gathering to raise awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault. Although the exact date is yet to be confirmed, the event should occur before the end of 2022.



Women's Wellbeing

For women in the AMR community to proactively look after and prioritise their social and emotional health and wellbeing across all life stages. (Team 9)

Supporting women's wellbeing is one of the focus areas of Mindful Margaret River.

Like there is not only one way to be a woman, and there is not a "one and the only way" to support women.

To ensure the wellbeing of women is carefully addressed, one must consider and thoroughly understand the inequalities women face due to their gender and across their lifespan.

Mindful Margaret River and the team of wonderful volunteers promote gender equality through access to workshops regarding financial education, superannuation, increasing their income, or participating in volunteer activities to improve their sense of self and sense of control, and their general sense of wellbeing. The next step would be to get some men involved!

The peer support group Radiance Network South West recorded a successful first term after being launched in February 2022 in Margaret River. The service, delivered in Busselton, Collie, and Bunbury for five years, has been successful extra support for women experiencing any postpartum mood disorder (anxiety, depression, stress, and more). Mothers can access the group, preferably with a professional referral (nurse, midwife, GP, child health nurse, psychiatrist, counsellor, or psychologist) every Thursday of the school term.

Mindful Margaret River has played a key role in establishing Radiance in town, and we are looking forward to the group expanding.





Call to MMR volunteers!

Administrative position

Do you have good administration skills? Do you have experience in doing agendas and minutes?

Do you have sound computer skills?

Mindful Margaret River is looking for a volunteer to help with the agendas and minutes for our Board meetings. It is a way to get involved and lend your skills to Mindful Margaret River in a very practical way. Our meetings are held every 6 weeks and take about 1.5 hours on a Friday afternoon during school hours. For more information, talk to Erin today.

Events

Do you like to work with the wider community?

Do you want to contribute to community wellbeing through hands-on activities?

Mindful Margaret River is looking to develop a list of volunteers that are available to support events from set up, running the event to pack down. It can range from helping set up a workshop for community members at the MR HEART to manning a stall at the MR Show. If you are interested in these types of activities please contact us!

Newsletter

Do you like fiddling with design programs or are a whiz at layouts and newsletters? Or maybe you like to edit and have an eye for detail? Mindful Margaret River is looking for someone to put up their hand to help with the layout, design and editing of our quarterly newsletter. Contact us if this sounds like you!

Blokes night

The Barbarians Group in Perth have offered to support a 'Blokes Night' in Margaret River. If you are interested in working or coordinating this event, or know of interested community members contact us at Mindful Margaret River.

Sporting clubs

If you are part of a sporting club and passionate about mental health, resilience, or getting more support for your club, consider joining Team 4 today.

For more information or to make and EOI for any of the above positions, just call Erin on 0448 760 737 or email us at info@mindfulmargaretriver.org.au

Other ways to volunteer

Are you interested in mentoring youth?

The Margaret River Senior High School is looking for volunteers

Contact: Kathryn Seisun for more information 0400 053 043





Training opportunities!

Conversations about suicide - half day course

Margaret River, 9 May, 9am - 1pm (\$80-100)

Non-suicidal self-injury - half day course

Margaret River, 9 May, 1.30pm-5.30pm (\$80-100)

Mental Health First Aid Training - 2 day course

Bunbury, 9-10 May, 9am-4.30pm

(\$55 normally \$250, subsidised by the Mental Health Commission)

Safe & Together Institute - webinar series June 21-28

Free online series, [register here today](#).

Series of four different webinars on family and domestic violence.

[Visit the link](#) for more info on dates and times

<https://academy.safeandtogetherinstitute.com/course/june-2022-webinar-series>.

Gatekeeper suicide prevention training - 2 day course

Bunbury, 27-28 June, 9am - 5pm (FREE)

Gatekeeper suicide prevention training - 2 day course

Busselton, 30 June - 1 July, 9am - 5pm (FREE)



EVENTS

Maternal mental health morning tea - all welcome

Radiance is hosting a morning tea at the MR Playgroup. Morning tea and a gift bag for mums provided!

Location: Margaret River Playgroup, 33 Tunbridge St Margaret River

Thursday 5th May, 10am - 12noon

RSVP: margaretriver@radiancesouthwest.com.au

Life skills program - FREE program

Just Home Margaret River runs a weekly life skills program covering off everything from composting to IT skills. This runs every Friday from 10am at the Community Centre next to the Soup Kitchen. They start each session with a coffee and chat, feel free to stay for the workshop. RSVP appreciated but not necessary, contact Gerry on 0483 061 849 or email: geraldine@justhome.org.au

The weekly program is available online at: mindfulmargaretriver.org.au/events

All events can be found online at mindfulmargaretriver.org.au/events

WANT TO HEAR MORE FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR STORIES?

All MMR **locals talking with locals** series can be found online at:

mindfulmargaretriver.org.au/blog



Why your story matters



Yen Hawkes
09/12/2021



How to grow kindness
in your own garden



Peter Durey
25/11/2021



Open the Gate to
conversation



Miriam Avery
05/08/2021



Boundaries are the key
to avoiding burn out



Rebecca Hannan
03/03/2022



Small town living: The
good, and the not so
good



Judith Maechler
01/12/2021



'New' locals share a real
need for connection



Erin Statz
06/07/2021



Do you need a cuppa?



Maxine Williams
10/06/2021



Take the time to make
use of the empty seat



Stuart Hicks
23/06/2021

Check out our podcast today:

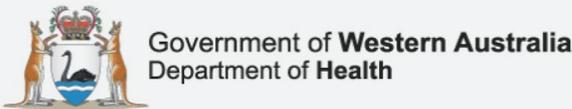
Online at mindfulmargaretriver.org.au/blog or
radiomargaretriver.com under podcasts

**Mindful Margaret
River**

Wednesday 6pm
Thursday 9:30am (repeat)



Mindful Margaret River proudly collaborates with and is supported by:



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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