

Support to keep head above water

New group helps South East residents struggling with mental health



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THE South East Junction has partnered with a group of locals who have experience in dealing with stress, depression and anxiety to deliver a new initiative called Lifeboat SE.

As the name suggests, the Lifeboat team will aim to help people manage stressful situations and will support early intervention to improve community health.

"There is no captain on a lifeboat, it's just a crew of people surviving together," Lifeboat SE founding member Matthew Brookes explained.

"We want to be there to help people that might be going through the same things we went through and show there is light at the end of the tunnel.

"I always thought I was big and ugly enough to handle anything thrown at me.

"I used to think the saying 'you can worry yourself sick' was silly, but now I understand it is possible and can happen to anyone."

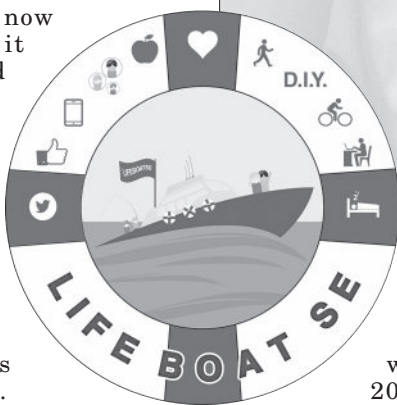
Mr Brookes said witnessing a traumatic accident and major changes in his workplace caused him more stress than he realised.

"I came across a fatality on the road and I was first on the scene and around the same time I had a lot of management changes going on at work," he said.

"All these things built up and turned into stress, anxiety and depression."

He said his high levels of stress manifested as physical symptoms.

"I had instances of blurred vision and I thought it was just age-related deterioration, but I



"I was tired all the time, but I could not sleep - we want to make people aware of the symptoms and get people to seek help early, because the worst case scenario is ultimately suicide.

"Lifeboat is a chance for us to share the tools we used to deal with stress or overcoming mental health problems."

The Lifeboat SE logo hints at these tools, with symbols for sleep,



MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP: South East Junction coordinator Nel Jans and Lifeboat SE member Matthew Brookes partnered to deliver the Lifeboat mental health initiative, which will be launched at Mount Gambier City Hall tonight. Picture: BRITTANY DENTON

exercise and social connection.

"Doing activities you enjoy is really important - I had no motivation to get off the couch and thankfully my family supported me and at least one family member would get me out of the house for a walk each night," Mr Brookes said.

"Lifeboat is about sharing our experiences and supporting others and connecting people with appropriate support services in the city.

"People might feel more comfortable talking to a mate in a more casual setting first rather than in that clinical environment.

"We want to get away from the stigma - these are illnesses that can be repaired."

South East Junction coordinator Nel Jans said the initiative aligned with the values of the mental health activity and resource centre.

"The crew of Lifeboat have lived experience and they want to share the tools they used to improve their mental health," she said.

"The monthly get together will be held out of office hours and will focus on local mates supporting local mates.

"When they approached us it made sense for us to take on the program - it fits with our values and what we promote."

Lifeboat SE will meet on the first Tuesday of each month at the level one conference room at the Mount Gambier Civic Centre from 6pm to 7pm.

A launch event will be held at Mount Gambier City Hall tonight, with drinks and nibbles from 6pm.

Interested individuals, sporting clubs, community groups and businesses are invited to attend.

The Junction
Mental Health Activity and Resource Centre Incorporated

The South East Junction, Mental Health Activity and Resource Centre

- Provides people with mental health issues (and concerned others) an accessible, respectful environment where friendship and mentoring is encouraged.
- Supports attendees on their path to recovery.
- Encourages attendees to build their skills and abilities by joining in the activities offered.
- Encourages healthy lifestyles through health information sessions, physical activities and outdoor activity.
- Shares valuable information on other organisations, programs and services which people with mental health issues can benefit.
- Raises awareness in the community for people with mental health issues.

The Activities

- Activities are designed by working together with the attendees and determining their needs.
- The Junction provides a safe low-key environment for activities including:
 - Social interaction and community engagement
 - Daily management of The Junction
 - Education and information on (mental) health topics
 - Healthy lifestyle education including cooking and exercise
 - Art and craft
 - Resources

Who is The Junction for?

The Junction is open to community members with a mental health issue, who they can benefit from services at The Junction

Staffing

The Junction is staffed by a co-ordinator with assistance from The Junction attendees, peer support workers and volunteers. Professionals and guest speakers are also involved in the activities. The Junction is run by a management Committee consisting of The Junction attendees, concerned others, government and non-government organisations and other community groups.

Location

The South East Junction in Mount Gambier and Mental Health Support groups in Millicent and Penola. For information ring 08 8724 5250 (on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10:00am and 12:30pm or email junctioncoord@gmail.com)

Star Watch



WITH *Sarah Kulkens*

ARIES: (March 21 - April 20)

Lucky Colour: Red
Lucky Day: Tuesday
Racing Numbers: 8, 3, 4, 5.
Lotto Numbers: 1, 14, 23, 27, 34, 45.
Some could be involved in a secret love affair. However, someone is watching you rather closely so it might not be worth the effort. The wiser will strive to avoid falling out with friends or neighbours.



TAURUS: (April 21 - May 20)

Lucky Colour: Green
Lucky Day: Monday
Racing Numbers: 8, 3, 4, 5.
Lotto Numbers: 8, 12, 14, 34, 45, 11.
Your social life should be livelier. More positive conditions in your present relationships and there could be someone nice about to come on the scene for the singles.



GEMINI: (May 21 - June 21)

Lucky Colour: Cream
Lucky Day: Sunday
Racing Numbers: 6, 8, 3, 4.
Lotto Numbers: 1, 16, 24, 35, 41, 22.
Present conditions could bring an interesting new romance on the scene or stimulate an ongoing one. Wiser to avoid friction with loved ones as this could be a critical period in all close relationships.



CANCER: (June 22 - July 22)

Lucky Colour: Silver
Lucky Day: Wednesday
Racing Numbers: 7, 2, 5, 4.
Lotto Numbers: 6, 13, 24, 34, 41, 22.
A more exciting romantic period coming up for most with a very interesting development in family or domestic arrangements. Family extensions and unusual social invitations.



LEO: (July 23 - August 22)

Lucky Colour: Violet. Lucky Day: Tuesday
Racing Numbers: 7, 2, 5, 6.
Lotto Numbers: 7, 13, 24, 31, 22, 20.
You are probably feeling more assertive and travel plans may be altered. Many could rekindle an old flame. However, there could be some friction over accommodation arrangements.



VIRGO: (August 23 - September 23)

Lucky Colour: Dark Green
Lucky Day: Friday
Racing Numbers: 6, 8, 2, 4.
Lotto Numbers: 1, 15, 23, 34, 41, 22.
New career or job advancement opportunities present themselves. Although romance looks good, do not believe all you hear and only half of what you see. Many of you will marry or take greater interest in your domestic affairs.



LIBRA: (September 24 - October 23)

Lucky Colour: Blue. Lucky Day: Sunday
Racing Numbers: 7, 2, 3, 6.
Lotto Numbers: 1, 14, 19, 34, 41, 22.
Most will be in for a hectic social life and become a popular guest. Gains are indicated and you could be lucky in a punt with an Aries. You could be feeling romantic; however, don't fall in love with love.



SCORPIO: (October 24 - November 22)

Lucky Colour: Orange
Lucky Day: Wednesday
Racing Numbers: 7, 9, 4, 1.
Lotto Numbers: 1, 6, 23, 38, 41, 10.
If you try, you will succeed. Family relationships should become less strained. A good financial opportunity could be just what you are looking for. Travel will recharge your batteries.



SAGITTARIUS: (November 23 - December 20)

Lucky Colour: Peach
Lucky Day: Saturday
Racing Numbers: 7, 9, 4, 1.
Lotto Numbers: 7, 12, 24, 3, 4, 45.
An interesting course of events could leave you wondering what you expect next. Someone from the past could have you rethink your future plans. A lot of obstacles get out of your way and your social life becomes more entertaining.



CAPRICORN: (December 21 - January 19)

Lucky Colour: White
Lucky Day: Thursday
Racing Numbers: 8, 9, 4, 3.
Lotto Numbers: 6, 3, 12, 24, 41, 22.
Good news is indicated. Social life could prove to be rather expensive. Your love life is more of a strain and a joke could misfire. However, watch out for a Scorpio.



AQUARIUS: (January 20 - February 19)

Lucky Colour: Pink
Lucky Day: Sunday
Racing Numbers: 6, 9, 3, 4.
Lotto Numbers: 6, 13, 24, 35, 45, 20.
Destiny tends to bring a romantic encounter with a very attractive person. This period could be lucky for a business venture and the single could make plans to be a double.



PISCES: (February 20 - March 20)

Lucky Colour: Green
Lucky Day: Thursday
Racing Numbers: 7, 8, 3, 4.
Lotto Numbers: 1, 5, 23, 25, 45, 33.
Sudden changes are indicated and many will be feeling hemmed in by routine and wanting a bit of excitement and romance which is alright if you are discreet.

