

## Youth Mental Health Summit 2017

Funded by the Mounties Group through Club-GRANTS, the YMHS is a collaboration between local mental health and community service providers to help students and teachers create a mental health Action Plan for participating high schools in the Fairfield and Liverpool LGA.

The YMHS successfully took place in term 2 and featured workshops, exhibitions and an engaging keynote presentation on topics such as identity, stress and anxiety management, trauma, domestic violence and more.

Mary MacKillop Catholic College and John Edmondson High School presented their successes and challenges in reducing stigma and improving mental wellness in a showcase segment that was well received by the audience.

The event was attended by 350 students and teachers from across 20 high schools in the region. Initial feedback from the evaluation forms has been extremely positive and 100% of participants agreed that the YMHS was an important and useful event in helping to remove the stigma associated with mental illness and in promoting positive mental and overall wellbeing in the school and home environment.

A further 40 community stakeholders and volunteers helped to make the event successful. Their feedback too was positive and they are looking forward to contributing towards the 2018 YMHS event.

A Post Summit Professional Development session for Teachers called "Accidental Counsellor" took place in term 3. Accidental Counsellors are people who find they are placed in a counselling/mentoring role by accident, as a result of requests for help from students, friends, colleagues, clients or others.

Areas covered in the training included:

- Evidence based Wellbeing strategies from the field of Positive Psychology
- Connection processes including reflective listening and the Perception Process
- How to influence using Solution Focused Communication

The comments and feedback from all 30 participants was overwhelmingly positive. Although 'role plays' are commonly viewed as awkward and uncomfortable, the role play scenarios demonstrated and practiced throughout the workshop proved to be thought-provoking, inspiring and ultimately very helpful in dealing with potentially challenging situations that participants may encounter in the future.

