

SA Mental Health Commission Media Release



Government of South Australia
SA Mental Health Commission



20 June 2019

SA forum to tackle mental health issues in sport

South Australian sports' players, coaches, parents and clubs will unite to tackle mental health issues in sport head-on at a special ***Mental Wellbeing in Sport*** forum at Morphettville Racecourse on Friday, June 28.

The SA Mental Health Commission and Sport SA are teaming up to present the free event in response to urgent calls from sporting organisations for help to recognise and respond to early warning signs of mental health problems and find ways to build their sporting communities' mental wellbeing.

South Australia has over 4000 sporting clubs with 58% (over 900,000) of the state's population participating in sport supported by over 260,000 volunteers.

South Australian sporting communities have identified anxiety, depression, suicide and managing injury and performance among their top mental health concerns during a recent survey by the SA Mental Health Commission.

SA Mental Health Commissioner Chris Burns says clubs are "crying out" for support and education on mental health for players of all ages and levels and to build the resilience of club members and participants.

"We know that being physically active and connecting with a community is critical to maintaining and improving our mental health and wellbeing but, like society as a whole, the sporting community is not immune from the impacts of mental health issues," he said.

"Statistics show that 45% of Australians will experience a diagnosable mental illness in their lifetime, so it's not surprising that sporting clubs have identified serious concerns about mental health issues and the urgent need for information, support and training."

Commissioner Burns said the event, which will be compered by the ABC breakfast presenter Ali Clarke, would facilitate better mental health awareness and encourage open and honest conversations around mental health.

...2/

Sport SA Chief Executive Officer Leah Cassidy said sporting communities are in crisis and often under pressure in many areas – from maintaining the mental wellbeing of participants to managing compliance, funding issues and keeping volunteers.

“Sport can play a pivotal role in supporting the positive mental health of participants and ensuring players, members and parents feel safe, connected and supported,” Ms Cassidy said.

“This event is an important opportunity to listen and learn from each other and provide the next steps for further support.”

Participants and invited guests at the event will explore issues, discuss what can make a difference to mental wellbeing and co-design resources that will help meet the needs identified by sporting communities.

Go to samentalhealthcommission.com.au for the link to register for the forum - or register direct at: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/mental-wellbeing-in-sport-registration-62243048634

For more information, contact SAMHC Communications Adviser Joan Atkinson on 0422 916 496.