

Port Lincoln Times

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Industry leader nominated

Hagen Stehr among nominees for SA Senior Australian of the Year

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Region calls for support

BY OLIVIA BARNES

SOUTH Australian Mental Health Commissioner Chris Burns was impressed by the strength of Eyre Peninsula communities when he visited the region last week.

Mr Burns visited Port Lincoln, Cummins and Ceduna to meet with local service providers and members of the community.

He said Eyre Peninsula people had been reaching out to discuss their concerns about mental health in the region.

"We always say we have to listen to lived experience and that's what we wanted to do," Mr Burns said.

Mr Burns said he was impressed by what the Eyre Peninsula community was doing in the absence of certain services.

He said youth suicide was among the local issues discussed as well as access to clinical support services and inconsistent grant funding



Sitting in the city you can never quite appreciate how tight the community is over there...

SA Mental Health Commissioner Chris Burns

models.

Mr Burns said while there were grants available many of them would only support a program for the first year or two.

He said non-government organisations had told him that that system made it difficult to start new programs as they needed long term funding to provide consistency for the community.

"You've got people who are investing a lot of themselves and after the first 12 or 24 months are having to spend

a lot of time reapplying for grants to keep programs running," Mr Burns said.

Mr Burns said he was impressed by how Eyre Peninsula communities were coming together to find solutions.

"Sitting in the city you can never quite appreciate how tight the community is over there (Eyre Peninsula), they're the ones who know how to solve problems.

"What we're doing is taking the messages back, being a voice for them where they need it," he said.

Mr Burns said similar issues arose at each of his meetings but the underlying message was one of strength.

He said local people were the experts who "know how to crack on and do the job".

"They're not sitting back and complaining, they're doing something about it," Mr Burns said.

"We couldn't promise anything but we've got a lot to pass on."



CAMPAIGN: David 'Lunch' Doudle shows his interview as part of the new Tourism Australia campaign.

Come live EP's philausophy

Local tour company owner David 'Lunch' Doudle is one of only eight tour operators across the nation to feature in Tourism Australia's three-year marketing campaign launched last week, "Come live our philausophy". He said international tourists were looking for the "authentic experience" and the Port Lincoln region certainly had that to offer. **FULL STORY, page 4**

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