



**Mallee Track Health &
Community Service**

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MEDIA RELEASE

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MALLEE TRACK OUTREACH WORKERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

DEMAND is on the rise for rural outreach workers in the Mallee, with the local health service encouraging people to continue to reach out for help and assistance.

Since being appointed Rural Outreach Workers with Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) in March this year, Renae Lanigan and Natarsha Hickey have been traveling throughout the catchment providing free, holistic and anonymous support to anyone in need.

“Most often, we help people by linking them in with other services,” Ms Lanigan explained.

“We go wherever we are needed, and we support anyone who needs support regardless of age, background or any other factors.”

The outreach workers are not counsellors, but support people by connecting them to other programs and support services available in the region.

“What we’re seeing is a lot of mental health issues within the community, whether it’s depression or anxiety, and we’re also seeing a lot of financial stress in people’s lives, food relief support, carers needing support, and youth issues,” she said.

“While we are not a counselling service, we are able to help people access the right support in a timely manner. We have strong referral pathways to other services, and that is key, especially in rural communities.”

Rural Outreach Workers provide support to anyone living in the MTHCS completely anonymously.

“There are many things that can impact wellbeing and increase a person’s susceptibility to mental illness and even suicide in remote areas. Sometimes a friendly person to talk to is all that is needed and at other times, it may be that a more specialist service is needed, but the individual may not know where to start,” Ms Lanigan said.

Support is provided in flexible ways, with the Rural Outreach Workers happy to drive to meet clients.

“Some clients prefer to be as discreet and anonymous as possible and that is something we completely respect and understand,” Ms Lanigan said

“We can see them in a way that suits them and that they are comfortable with. We really do try to make the whole process as easy and client-led as possible – it needs to be so that we can all work towards a successful outcome that provides options.”

Anyone struggling or wanting support can call or send a text to the Rural Outreach Workers team: Renae on 0429 090 942 or Natarsha on 0492 001 181.

For more information on the Rural Outreach Workers and the support they provide, contact MTHCS on 5092 1111. **Ends.**

For interviews or further information contact MTHCS CEO Lois O’Callaghan (03) 5092 1111