



MEDIA RELEASE

19 JUNE 2009

MEN'S HEALTH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A pub on at 7 o'clock on a cold winter's morning isn't the first place you would expect to find a bunch of blokes gathered to discuss their health over breakfast. Footy, maybe... but their health? No way.

At 7am last Thursday morning about 30 blokes fronted up to Port Huon's Kermandie Hotel and did just that...and there wasn't a bacon and egg roll in sight.

Coordinated by the Huon Valley Council's Rural Health Unit, the breakfast was in support of Men's Health Week, an annual nation-wide campaign designed to increase awareness of men's health issues.

Held from the 15th to the 21st of June, the week-long campaign celebrates the contribution men make to family, work and the community. A major goal of the campaign is to remind men that when it comes to their physical and mental wellbeing they don't need to tough it out or go it alone.

This year the focus was on preventative health and healthy behaviours that men can adopt in relation to physical, mental health, and sexual health and function.

As part of last Thursday's breakfast, employees from Forestry Tasmania, Ta Ann Veneer Mill, Drysdale Engineering, and DL & KL Gordon Excavating, Quarrying and Construction, were all given free health checks courtesy of the Huon Valley Council's Geeveston Medical Centre. Blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol and blood sugar levels were all measured as part of the health check, while Doctors Angela Retchford and John Riley from the Geeveston Medical Centre were also on hand to conduct brief consultations and answer any questions relating to health issues.

One of those present at the breakfast was Forestry Tasmania employee Keegan Direen, who signed up for the health checks after seeing a poster promoting the event at his workplace. Like most young men, health is not a major priority right now for Mr Direen.

"I know I should do more exercise but to be honest by the time I get home from work I'm too tired. I'd rather have a couple of beers with my mates. I'm hoping this morning will motivate me to look after my health a bit more and keep an eye on how things are going." Mr Direen said.

"I don't spend a lot of time worrying about my health and I only ever go to a Doctor when I'm sick. I should go for regular check-ups. It's important you know what is going on with your health."

Adrian Coulson also attended the breakfast and takes a different view to managing his health.

"I have a family history of heart trouble so I take that pretty seriously. I have regular check-ups with my GP and I'm more aware of what is going on with my health, which I think is a good thing. There's no harm in monitoring what's going on. It's good to see so many blokes here this morning and I hope some of them will keep on with this."

more...

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The Council's Rural Health Coordinator, Julie Gordon, says that offering health assessments through the workplace has worked well in encouraging men to think more about their health.

"We've had a good response to the health checks we ran last week. Forestry Tasmania, the Ta Ann Veneer Mill, Drysdale Engineering, and DL & KL Gordon Excavating, Quarrying and Construction really supported the morning and made sure the guys were given the opportunity to attend if they wished. It's a great way to motivate a target group that is normally pretty difficult to reach."

More information on men's health issues and work place health assessments can be obtained from the Huon Valley Council's Rural Health Coordinator, Julie Gordon - 6264 0300.



The Geeveston Medical Centre's Dr Angela Retchford prepares to measure Adrian Coulson's cholesterol and blood sugar levels.



Dr John Riley from the Geeveston Medical Centre measures Keegan Direen's blood pressure as part of the Men's Health Week breakfast held recently at the Kermandie Hotel.

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Forestry Tasmania's Hayden Woolley (left) and John Townsend enjoy some light reading at the Men's Health Week breakfast.

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For additional comments, please contact:

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