

MEDIA RELEASE

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Art, theatre, choral workshops linked to good mental health

Community choirs, visual arts and photography workshops, and drama activities for adults make up a multi-arts approach to building good mental health across the NSW central west.

Running April to June, a series of eight small workshop programs will run in Bathurst, Orange, Lithgow, Cowra, Forbes, Parkes and Grenfell.

Regional arts development organisation Arts OutWest has set up the workshops on behalf of House with No Steps, who have provided the funding.

“Arts is a great vehicle for assisting people with their mental health wellbeing, particularly when we’re able to strengthen these projects through relationships with the health sector,” Arts OutWest executive director Tracey Callinan said.

Each of the programs specifically targets particular groups, including adults living with a variety of mental health challenges; adults with learning disabilities; and carers. Some of the programs will be for existing groups, others are open to the public.

Arts OutWest has built this program in close consultation with mental health and disability support services across the region.

Different artforms will be used in different locations, ranging from a choir with musicians Smith & Jones in Bathurst, manga cartoonist Matthew Lim working with young people in Lithgow, and workshops at Bloomfield in Orange with mosaic artist Catherine Bennett.

Regional arts organisation Arts OutWest has many years’ experience running arts projects with health outcomes and is regarded as a regional leader in the arts and health field.

Projects that people can sign up for include:

- Bathurst - Wellbeing Choir with Abby Smith and Sophie Jones of Smith & Jones. Friday mornings 10 weeks starting 10am at April 28 at the HACC Centre at the Seymour Centre.
- Cowra - Wellbeing Choir. 10 weeks, May-June.
- Forbes - Visual Arts workshops. 10 weeks, May-June.
- Parkes - Visual Arts workshops. 10 weeks, May-June.
- Grenfell – art or photography workshops. 10 weeks, May-June.

Other projects for targeted or existing groups include mosaic making at Amaroo Ward at Bloomfield Hospital in Orange; Manga drawing workshop in Lithgow with artist Matthew Lin as part of the Subliminal Festival; and a theatre project for young adults with learning disability in Orange.

Participants are currently being called for the choirs in Bathurst and Cowra. Call Arts OutWest on 6338 4657. Sign-ups for other projects will be announced soon.