The Men's Hub – Snack & Chat

Rotary Club of Boronia

Overview:

The **Men's Hub – Snack & Chat** is a weekly, community-driven mental health and social support initiative for men aged 18 and over in Boronia and surrounding suburbs in the City of Knox. This program provides a safe, welcoming environment where men can access peer-led support, short-term solution-focused counseling, and referral services. With stigma and isolation affecting many men, our program fills a significant gap in accessible and culturally responsive mental health support.

Objectives:

- To provide free, confidential, non-clinical support to men who may not otherwise access mental health services,
- To reduce isolation and improve mental health outcomes through connection, shared experiences, and facilitated group discussion,
- To offer goal-focused support through peer mentoring and mental health workers,
- To link participants with external services for long-term or specialised support.

Community Need:

In the Knox area, services tailored to men's specific emotional and social needs remain limited. Many men are reluctant to engage with mainstream mental health systems due to stigma or past experiences of not being heard or believed. Our model removes barriers by offering a casual, drop-in structure that encourages natural engagement.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Beyond Blue confirms that men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women, with low rates of help-seeking. In Victoria, there is a growing demand for services that offer early intervention for men in distress.

The **Men's Hub – Snack & Chat** is scheduled to launch in October 2025, offering a new weekly service designed to attract and engage men who may otherwise go unsupported. This initiative aims to meet a significant gap in early-intervention, non-clinical support for men in the local community.

Capacity to Deliver:

The **Men's Hub – Snack & Chat** is co-directed by two experienced community mental health professionals with over 20 years combined experience and qualifications in mental health, AOD, counselling, and social work. They are supported each week by

- Three volunteers with valuable lived experience.
- Two male volunteers provided by the Rotary Club of Boronia.

The program operates from Boronia Scout Hall. At each weekly session, there are always two male volunteers present to create comfort and relatability for male participants.

The project team is supported by the Rotary Club of Boronia through branding, marketing, volunteer attendance and formal letters of collaboration.

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Financial Need and Feasibility:

We are seeking funds to support:
- Venue hire,
- Catering (simple sandwich lunches, tea/coffee, etc.),
- Marketing and outreach materials (flyers, posters),
- Guest speaker honorariums,
- Incidental operating costs.

The program is ready to launch in October 2025 and has received strong early interest and support. We aim to use these funds to stabilise and grow this weekly service.

Level of Benefit to Knox Residents:

This project directly benefits Knox residents by:
- Offering a safe space for vulnerable men in the community,
- Providing early support to prevent crisis-level interventions,
- Reducing community-level impacts of mental ill-health, such as family breakdown or unemployment,
- Connecting isolated men back into the community.

The ripple effect of improving men's mental health has positive outcomes for families, workplaces, and broader society.

Consultation and Partnerships:

This project is sponsored and supported by the Rotary Club of Boronia.

We plan to continue building relationships with:
- EACH (for professional and psychosocial support),
- Community Legal Centres (guest speakers),
- Centrelink (guest speakers),
- DFFH and housing services,
- Local bakeries (via stakeholder letters),
- Low-cost counselling providers,
- Men's support organisations such as The Black Dog Institute, MensLine Australia, and other local peer-led groups,
- Infolink, Knox.

Men's Hub – Snack & Chat addresses a critical gap for men in Boronia and the broader Knox region. It is backed by qualified and experienced leadership and a reputable community partner. Funding will ensure a successful launch and long-term sustainability.