



How To Be Well Goes Rural

IMPACT REPORT

September 2025

Wheatbelt, Great Southern, and Goldfields area



Purpose of the trip

Mental health discussions are more stigmatised in rural areas compared to the city. I will also note a key finding from the WAAMH 2025 regional community report: "There are gaps in support available that address a holistic range of needs like social connections, financial security, and physical wellbeing - especially in communities with high levels of stigma and low mental health literacy". The purpose of this trip was to address these issues and be a support in combating the barriers those in rural areas face when discussing and managing mental health challenges.

Goals

1. To increase mental health literacy in individuals living in rural areas.
 2. To bring connection, conversation, and mental health support to rural communities.
 3. To encourage conversation into action.
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Trip Outline

Date(s): 08/09/2025 - 28/09/2025

Communities Visited: Boddington, Manjimup, Denmark, Albany, Ravensthorpe, Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Wagin, Cunderdin, Moora

Facilitator(s): Lily Gresele

Partners/Sponsors: Only Vans, Sam Shepherd, Community donations

A huge shout out and thank you to everyone that has demonstrated their support for this trip. Without the incredible sponsors noted above, this mission would not have been possible. I am grateful for your belief in me to deliver my message across the state and create change in the suicide prevention space.

Milestones

10 rural towns visited

16 workshops facilitated

2,683km travelled

300+ lives impacted

Trip Summary

How To Be Well Goes Rural was an outreach initiative designed to bring connection, conversation, and mental health support to rural communities. Over the course of the trip, the HTBW team travelled across regional towns to host wellbeing workshops, share lived experiences, and foster open dialogue around mental health and community care.

Throughout the journey, Lily engaged with schools, community groups, and individuals who often face barriers to mental health support due to isolation, stigma, or limited resources. Each stop offered a safe space for people to connect, learn, and reflect on their own wellbeing journey through interactive sessions, storytelling, and practical skills to support active steps into wellbeing maintenance.

The trip not only strengthened community connection but also deepened the understanding of the unique challenges faced in rural areas. From heartfelt conversations to shared laughter and tears, *HTBW Goes Rural* reminded participants and facilitators alike of the power of human connection, compassion, and shared healing.

Overall we impacted over 300 individuals from Boddington, Manjimup, Denmark, Albany, Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Wagin, Cunderdin, and Moora. Topics discussed include sharing a story of lived experience, Tools on preventing burnout and the importance of self-care, Empathy and stress management tools, and self-love. A variety of delivery methods were used including keynote presentations, and more intimate workshops.

Community feedback highlighted the value of the program's open, human-centred approach and its ability to spark important conversations. Participants reported an increased sense of connection, understanding, and confidence in seeking support for

themselves and others. Local service providers also expressed interest in future collaborations to sustain the positive momentum created.

The trip demonstrated that grassroots, lived-experience-led initiatives can play a vital role in bridging the gap between mental health education and community connection in rural settings. *HTBW Goes Rural* reaffirmed the importance of accessibility, empathy, and presence. Most importantly it encouraged participants to take active steps into support seeking — taking wellbeing conversations beyond city borders and into the heart of the communities that need them most.

This journey reinforced the HTBW mission — to make mental health conversations more accessible, relatable, and real — no matter where you live

Community Impact

- Increased awareness and conversations about mental health.
 - Improved access to wellbeing resources or support.
 - Strengthened sense of connection and community.
 - Participants felt empowered and hopeful regarding their current challenges.
 - Participants felt encouraged to take active steps towards future help seeking.
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Participant Feedback

“I’m sure some workers will benefit from this in the future”

“I am struggling really hard lately and I am doing a lot of self-care to prevent myself from burnout and having you come and talk to the organisation yesterday really helped”

“Very well presented with useful information”

“You’re reminding students and community members that they matter, their feelings matter, and their mental health matters. You’re a powerful advocate and a marvellous ambassador for mental well-being”

Main reflections:

1. Young people are still scared to reach out for support, in fear of judgement, or punishment.
 2. Young people find it a challenging task to verbalise what they are feeling/what their emotions feel like.
 3. Young people can easily identify ways/services to seek support, however are resistant to use the support when needed.
 4. Older community members in some rural towns remain hesitant to use mental health supports, despite encouragement and tool implementations from councils/resource centres.
 5. A deeper focus needs to be implemented regarding action. Conversation has started, now barriers need to be broken for real support seeking. Community members require a large amount of encouragement for them to invest in their mental wellbeing.
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Future Opportunities

Recommendations for ongoing support for students in rural communities

- Increase implementation of mental health programs into schools.
- Give students safe spaces to explore their emotions/feelings non-judgementally.
- Explore options that cater for the diverse sensory needs of students.

Ideas for continued engagement and partnerships

- Partner with **'How To Be Well Community'** an online, mentally safe space for support empowerment and conversation - Create package deals for schools to allow students access to the spaces for continued wellbeing support.
- Partner with corporate organisations with packages for staff members to join **'How To Be Well Community'** to support staff in accessing and working towards safe and health coping mechanisms and resources.

Next steps for How To Be Well

- **Create and establish package deals for How To Be Well Community for participants and organisations to explore and to receive support post workshops.**
- How To Be Well Goes Rural 2026

- How To Be Well Goes Rural 'North'

Trip Highlights



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