

Media Release

SA Health

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START THE CONVERSATION ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Riverlanders are being urged to speak out about rape and sexual assault, as 15 black silhouettes and posters go up on display across the region to raise awareness of the issue.

Members of the Riverland Rape and Sexual Assault Network (RRSAN) are encouraging people to ask questions and seek support during the awareness campaign, which is being launched next Tuesday, October 18 2016, at the Riverland General Hospital.

RRSAN member and Barmera-based Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service Social Worker, Catherine Schwartzkopff, said locals will notice the black silhouettes standing in town centres during the next two weeks.

“The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness and get a community conversation started about the serious issue of rape and sexual assault,” Ms Schwartzkopff said.

“It is sometimes confronting for people to seek help face-to-face in the first instance, so we’re raising awareness that rape and sexual assault exists in our community and there are services available locally and state-wide to offer support and counselling.

“One in five women and one in 22 men over the age of 15 have experienced one or more episodes of sexual violence in their lives.

“Survivors of rape and sexual assault – male and female – are encouraged to contact us via our confidential postage-paid postcard to share stories, poems or artwork expressing their experiences and the effects of rape and sexual assault.”

Ms Schwartzkopff said the RRSAN is hoping that an arts project may eventuate from the sharing of ideas, to engage survivors and to offer a pathway to reclaiming their lives from the effects of rape and sexual assault.

“Anyone is free to take a postcard, which will be available from all Riverland Health services and where the silhouettes are on display,” Ms Schwartzkopff said.

On behalf of RRSAN, Ms Schwartzkopff thanked the Barmera Men’s Shed and Renmark Rotary Club for their support of the project.

“Renmark Rotary Club members have helped with printing the posters and postcards, while the Barmera Men’s Shed have done a marvellous job making the silhouettes,” Ms Schwartzkopff said.

“It is wonderful to see the community backing this initiative to create discussion and to let those affected by rape and sexual assault know that there is assistance available.”

The awareness campaign will be launched on Tuesday, October 18 2016, at the Riverland General Hospital in Berri at 11.30am.

For more information

Call the SA Health Media Line
Telephone: 08 8226 6488

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The silhouettes will be on display at the launch, before being moved to various locations around Berri, Barmera, Loxton, Renmark and Waikerie.

Anyone seeking support can contact Yarrow Place on 1800 817 421 or the 24-hour phone counselling service 1800RESPECT on 1800 7377 328.