

West Coast Youth & Community Support Proudly Presents the;

LIFE IS A CIRCUS NEWSLETTER

Creating a Mentally Fit EP

EDITION 4—October 2015

Roll up, roll up and welcome to my final newsletter before I go on maternity leave. Yes, that's right this clown is almost 36 weeks pregnant, and will be juggling some very different balls in her life in the very new future.

I think I've drafted this newsletter in my head 1,000 times, and each time I find myself floundering for the words in our beautiful English language that will "do this project justice".

Each time, there are four words that come to mind

"look at us go!"

These four words have been repeated between Angela Cordon and myself over the past 18 months since the inception of the whole "Life is a Circus gala dinner", and have continued to be thrown around, shouted out loud, giggled over the phone, highlighted in bold in emails and shared between hugs, laughs and emotional outbursts at every single milestone we've achieved along the way.

And what a wild ride it has been!

So today's newsletter is all about our message, our vision, gratitude, hope, passion and our dreams for the future.

If photos speak 1,000 words then this newsletter sure is going to be jam packed with a whole lot of excitement and gratefulness.

So first I thought I'd start with some facts.... some reasons as to how and why I believe this project is SO important for our community, and how, when even at 36 weeks pregnant, I can still muster passion, excitement and enthusiasm to bring this dream to life, and why I know our Mentally Fit EP Project is only just beginning.

58,700

The population of the Eyre Peninsula according to the ever reliable Wikipedia.

11, 740

The potential number of people suffering from a **mental illness** on the Eyre Peninsula according to the statistics.

"1 in 5 people experience a mental illness in Australia in any given year" (Blackdog Institute)

BUT our message is that **Mental Fitness** is "everyone's business!"

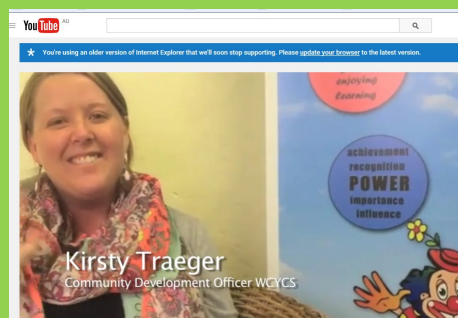
ABC Open's Ringmasters on the Eyre Peninsula

Mental Health Week 2013 kicked off the mental health awareness campaign on the Eyre Peninsula through the amazingly talented Emma Pedler from ABC Open.

While Emma would probably bashfully blush with me saying this, it was her support that helped me realise the potential of my dream and gave me the confidence to start blogging and speaking openly and honestly about my experience with mental illness.

Together with Deane Williams (local radio presenter for ABC), the ABC Open team have continued to support the Mentally Fit EP Project's vision since this time.

Emma kindly filmed **"Our Journey to a Mentally Fit EP"** as a 6 part mini series—that can be viewed at the following links:



Part 1—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riZpVedqA9A>

Part 2—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8DN6DmKI5Y>

Part 3—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-AqXZKdCX8>

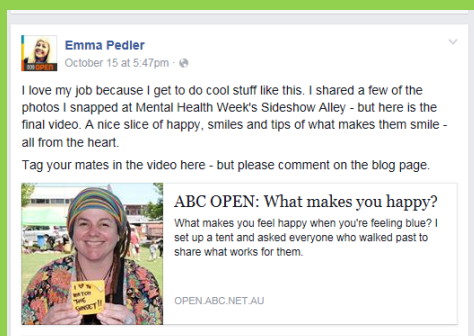
Part 4—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-AqXZKdCX8>

Part 5—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtAQpfsleAs>

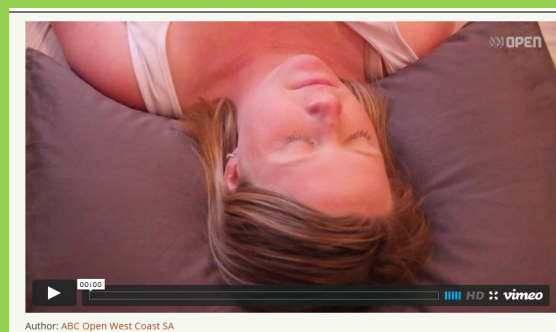
Part 6—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=657IQClbsVA>

As part of the ABC's Mental As campaign during MHW 2015—Emma also recently pitched a tent at our Sideshow Alley down on the foreshore on Friday the 9th of October to ask people what they do to cheer up when they are feeling sad.

Check out the amazing clip that she put together here—it's very inspiring and uplifting and captures the essence and atmosphere of the day!



What Makes Your Happy; filmed at Sideshow Alley



My story; Behind Her Beaming Smile <https://open.abc.net.au/>

On top of that, Deane Williams and Emma have interviewed both Sue Berry and myself on the local ABC radio, following our journey to a Mentally Fit EP, highlighting our achievements along the way, promoting our FREE Take Charge of Your Life courses in Tumby Bay, Port Lincoln and Cummins, and advertising the FUN and FREE activities that rolled out during MHW 2015.

We are so grateful for the ABC Open's support, and for both Emma and Deane who are both HUGE assets to our local community, providing a voice for the people and sharing local projects run and funded by local people to raise awareness and to create a Mentally Fit EP.

Emma also recently MC'ed the firework finish to Mental Health Week—the Circus Lounge, and shared a very special and personal clip that we created together about the seriousness of mental illness and my story; **Behind Her Beaming Smile**.

Small towns, big hearts

By [Emma Pedler](#) · 5 min read

Here in regional South Australia, everyone knows everyone. You can't walk down the street without saying "G'day" to at least 10 people. And, even if you don't see them, they will see you.

When you live in a small community, putting yourself out there can be hard. By 'out there', I mean sharing a story that could full well mean you come under judgement by your peers and neighbours for whatever it is you're sharing.

Everyone knows everyone... and, in a lot of cases, a lot of their private stuff too. There will always be the people who whisper to their friends "Did you hear about...?" as people walk past.

And this is why I was honoured when four people agreed to share their mental health stories with us for Mental Health week last year. But, before I get into that I want to talk about an incredible young Eyre Peninsula woman who was a key part of it all happening. To read Emma's comments on this young woman (me haha), please follow this link: <https://open.abc.net.au/explore/77029>

As we approached October last year (2013), I met with Kirsty and we spoke about how we could highlight Mental Health Week and the different experiences of country people. She spoke to some of her friends and asked if they'd be interested in sharing their stories. Some weren't quite ready... others were hesitant and a few jumped at the chance.

After many weeks of discussion, writing, editing, writing, editing and more discussion, four mental health stories were posted on ABC Open. It was the first time that all those writers had shared their mental health stories and they were nervous about putting themselves out there.

While the stigma of mental illness sometimes still remains, these four brave writers and their supporters have helped to make it easier to talk about mental health in their communities.

After their stories went live, the most amazing things started to happen. A discussion started in their country towns. People asked how they were and wanted to know. Kind-hearted community people brought around food. Old friends dropped in to say hello and apologised for not visiting more often. A line of communication opened up.

If you let them, people can surprise you in the best of ways.

Mental Health Week 2013—Special Media Achievement Award

All of this then led to me recently finding out that these stories have won a **Special Media Achievement Award in the Australia and New Zealand Mental Health Awards**. Each of the writers will get to pocket \$500 and know that they've been judged as being winners.

Sean, Rachel, Alicia and Carla, I'm so proud of you and you should be so proud of what you've done, not just in this win, but in life.

Congratulations!

If you need advice about coping with your situation there are lots of places to get help. Find someone to help you.

24 hour support is available from [Lifeline](#) - 13 11 14

Related links

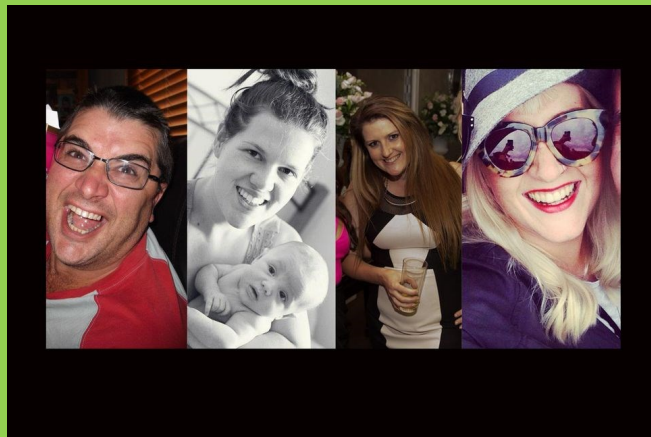
[I'm a country bloke with depression - Sean Tosold](#)

[Being a mum can be hard - Alicia Bates](#)

[What's wrong? If only I knew - Rachel Fuller](#)

[I climbed out of the black hole and started to fight back - Carla Naismith](#)

[Unspoken Conversations - Kirsty Traeger's blog](#)



Rewind to 18 months ago... The Life's a Circus Gala Dinner Committee

After the success of MHW 2013 with ABC Open, my next big dream was to create a gala dinner—and that's when the circus rolled into town!

The circus being **Penny Will** (who had a vision to raise awareness about promotion, prevention and early intervention for mental health after suffering herself), and 4 inspiring ladies who are all carers of family members and friends with a mental illness on top of their important roles in mental health in our local community; **Angela Cordon** (local Expert by Experience Officer for Country Health), **Ashley Lawrie** (volunteer accountant and "chair" for the committee), **Jo Clark** (CEO of WCYCS), **Leonie Green** (CarersSA) plus **myself**.

Flipping Mental Illness On Its Head was the first ever article to appear in the Port Lincoln Times that planted the seed for the focus on mental wellbeing in our community in July 2014.



FOCUS ON MENTAL WELLBEING: From back: group members Angela Cordon, Ashley Lawrie, Rotarians Mike Munro and Adrian Glover, Leonie Green, Jo Clark from West Coast Youth and Community Support, Kirsty Traeger and Penny Will are behind a new Eye Peninsula Mental Wellbeing Program.



Lesley Scarman Photography

Photo credit to the Port Lincoln Times—to view the story click here: <http://www.portlincolntimes.com.au/story/2452735/flipping-mental-illness-on-its-head/>

The committee and MC all glammed up for the Life's a Circus Gala dinner (MC—Emma Forster).

Without the passion, vision, commitment, energy, FUN, resources, knowledge and relationships with these amazing women, this project quite simply would've never gotten off of the ground.

Meetings were held over coffee at Del Giornos or around Ang Cordon's dinner table, always accompanied with wine, cheese platters and many, many laughs, but also laptops, agendas, to do lists, new ideas, networking, sponsorship deals, raffle item donations, and exciting developments with relationships that were forming in our local community.

Each and everyone of these ladies VOLUNTEERED their time, on top of juggling full time jobs, families, being wives and partners, playing sport, social lives, children and grandchildren because they had a PASSION and a DESIRE to initiate change and to INSPIRE our local community to raise AWARENESS about the seriousness of MENTAL ILLNESS, to RAISE money for a MENTAL WELLBEING PROJECT, and to deliver FREE courses and INFORMATION SESSIONS into our local community—with a focus on taking the SERVICES to the PEOPLE, in PORT LINCOLN, CUMMINS and TUMBY BAY.

Local people, combining with local businesses and services, to create a project, funded by local donations to benefit their community.

There was something special about the Life's a Circus Gala Dinner—there's not many events that you are greeted by dancing clowns, ticket booths and a red carpet with a photographer snapping away making you feel as though you are a celebrity while being all glammed up with the odd circus prop chucked in.

Guests were treated to a band that was flown over from Adelaide, called Jazz it Up, with The Voices—Sarah Lloyd, a memorable performance by dramatist Jo Zealand, a 3 course meal by Kris Bunder's team from Del Giornos, live and silent auctions and a dance floor that was full all night.

The night raised \$24,000, which was matched by a Community Action Network Grant, to allow for a Community Development Officer to be employed one day a week at West Coast Youth and Community Support to bring the Life's a Circus Gala dinner committees dream and vision of a mental wellbeing program to life.

West Coast Youth and Community Support Lead the Way

Within 2 minutes of meeting Jo Clark (it may have even been sooner—she sure knows her stuff and can real off a pretty good spiel in less than 30 seconds!), the CEO from West Coast Youth and Community Support, our Life's a Circus Gala Dinner Committee knew that we had found the organisation that matched our vision of a ground up approach to enriching our community.

It's incredibly difficult for me, now 18 months on, to describe my absolute gratitude, respect, admiration and support for this non for profit organisation which supported our vision right from the very beginning, and has provided me with the opportunity to step into the most fulfilling role of my career as a Community Development Officer.

To be honest, before meeting Jo Clark, I didn't know much about West Coast Youth and Community Support—even though I had grown up on the Eyre Peninsula and the organisation has been around for approx 35 years. I was born and bred in Cummins, and I guess, lived inside a bit of a naïve bubble to the challenges and diversity that the Eyre Peninsula faces. When I thought of the EP, I thought of the beautiful untouched beaches, Saturdays in Winter spent with your car parked around the footy oval cheering on your local team, a family orientated community, the Seafood Capital of the World, the riches, beauty and simplicity of a region I love so much and am proud to call home.

It wasn't until my own life was touched by mental illness that I started to open up my eyes to the “hidden suffering” that goes on behind closed doors and smiling faces in our community.

So here's some facts that you may not know—that have shocked me—but that have shaped my thinking, behaviour and vision for a Mentally Fit EP, and that have also cemented in my idea that our Life's A Circus committee really did hit the JACKPOT when Jo Clark crossed our paths.



4843 individual supports to the 420 people that West Coast Homelessness Team have seen who are impacted by lack of sustainable housing from 2014-2015 across the Eyre Peninsula.

125 young people and their families have received support from our very own Sue Berry, part of the Mentally Fit EP team, in her role as a Family Counsellor.

Over 1,000 young people's lives have been enriched by the West Coast Youth Team through education, youth programs, holiday activities, Youth Opportunities and more!

I think we've all seen Jo's face in the Port Lincoln Times, seen her on the local news, and heard her speak on the radio or if you're lucky enough, even met her in person, and because WCYCS do SO much for our community, we can mistake that this organisation must be financially independent. But, what we don't see is the hours upon hours spent applying for grants, planning fundraising events, reporting, and crunching numbers, and juggling each and everyone of the employees precious time and energy to meet the growing need for support and guidance in our community.

Each and everyone of the people who work at WCYCS are incredibly passionate, driven people who literally hit the ground running, cramming more into a day than most would 3!

I am proud, honoured and ever so grateful to have my life and career touched, and shaped by WCYCS—and Jo Clark—the heart that beats so strongly and voice that speaks so loudly, for each and every person on the Eyre Peninsula.



www.facebook.com/EPMentalWellbeing



Strengthening Community Partnerships

The Life's a Circus committee were incredibly passionate from the very beginning about forming lasting partnerships with local community groups, organisations and businesses who “spoke for the people,” were genuinely committed to making a difference in their local community, and who supported grass roots ideas that may not have otherwise had a chance to prosper.

Again, as Ang Cordon says “when you throw your cards in the air and the timing is right things will just stick”—and it was by “chance” that around the time that our committee were “scoping out” potential partners for our project, Rotary had just elected a new president Adrian Glover, and the Community Bendigo Banks were having a joint meeting.

We were incredibly fortunate to be able to meet and present our vision to some strapping young lads from Rotary, and the Port Lincoln, Cummins and Tumby Bay board members from the Bendigo Banks.

Cummins District
Community Bank® Branch



Both organisations already have a great relationship with WCYCS and very generously donate funding and man power to many projects run through our organisation, so this “new project” quickly received their support and commitment.

There are a number of reasons that we were absolutely stoked to have both on board.

1. West Coast Youth and Community Support’s target audience is to “aspire to a thriving community where all people are valued” - so the support of Rotary who represent the “more mature” population but who have deep roots and passion to support the up and coming young people in our community, Combined with the representation across the 3 branches in Cummins, Tumby

Bay and Port Lincoln, helped to shape the vision and show the commitment to support the **West Coast** and whole of the **Eyre Peninsula**.

2. Both organisations are held in high respect in our community and are known for their very generous donations in man power, funding, and advocating for community groups and people from all ages and backgrounds.
3. VOLUNTEERS—yes that’s right, everyone on the Bendigo Bank Boards and the Rotary committee, plus our Life’s a Circus Committee were volunteering their time to empower our community and to make a difference.



Port Lincoln
Community Bank® Branch



The funding pledge from the Cummins and Port Lincoln Bendigo Banks of a combined \$5000 right from the very beginning meant that even if the gala dinner was a flop, WCYCS could still deliver a mental wellbeing program into Cummins, Tumby Bay and Port Lincoln.

Rotary’s pledge of \$500, enabled the committee to secure the band Jazz it Up to fly over from Adelaide to make the gala dinner extra special.

The Port Lincoln Bendigo Bank also funded art workshops for both adults and young carers during MHW 2015, with great success judging by the smiles on the participants faces! They also kindly lent us the Bendigo Bank tents for our sideshow alley down on the foreshore.

The Cummins Bendigo Bank committed \$1000 to cover the costs incurred by WCYCS for creating the hugely successful sideshow alley on the Port Lincoln foreshore.

Rotary’s new president, John Myers, has pledged \$5000 towards ongoing funding for our project beyond the current funding that runs out in November 2015, and is incredibly passionate about empowering the youth in our community.



www.facebook.com/EPmentalWellbeing



Strengthening Community Partnerships



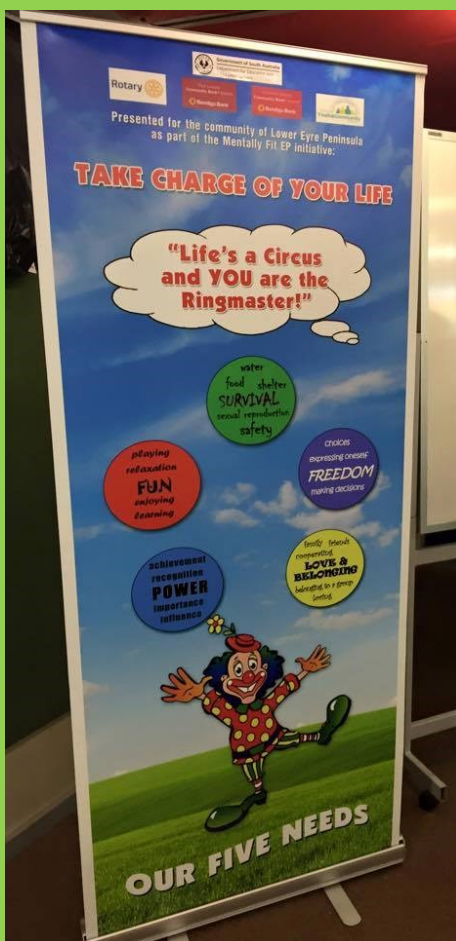
Rotary President John Myers presenting the Mentally Fit EP with a \$5000 cheque to continue the project in 2016.



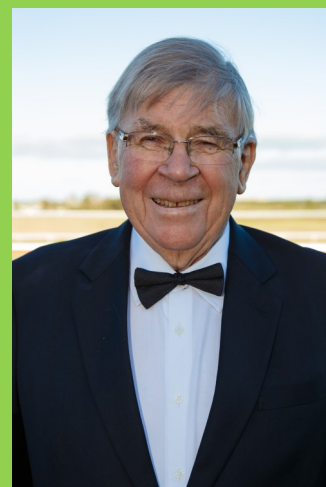
The Cummins Bendigo Bank Manager Braden Gale drawing the raffle ticket winners at the Life's a Circus Gala Dinner in MHW 2014



The Cummins Bendigo Bank banner standing loud and proud on the main stage at the sideshow alley.



The Take Charge of Your Life banner proudly representing our sponsors and partners who have supported the Mentally Fit EP project right from its inception and allowed for the course to be offered for FREE!



The late Reg Kemp, and avid member of Rotary Port Lincoln, enjoyed the Life's a Circus gala dinner!



Mike Munro and his lovely wife, who is a keen advocate and multiple hat wearer for Bendigo Bank and Rotary who is passionate about supporting the Mentally Fit EP project.



Port Lincoln BB tent providing shelter for the Cellar Folk Clubs joy!



LEFT—Ngahua with her creation at the FREE Port Lincoln Bendigo Bank Healing Hearts and Minds artwork shop in MHW 2015.

RIGHT—Comparing bellies with our sausage sizzle masterchefs AKA Rotarians who kindly donated their time and the profits from the BBQ towards the Mentally Fit EP Project at the Sideshow Alley.



Country Health SA—Our Local Expert by Experience Officer—Links Between Government and NGO.

Another big vision for the Life's a Circus committee was to build connections with services on the Eyre Peninsula so people knew where they could go for help if they happened to become unwell.

Ang Cordon provided the ever so valuable link between West Coast Youth and Community Support and Country Health SA, a relationship that has been further strengthened by Team Leader Carol-Ann Stanborough's commitment to a whole team approach, seen at the Sideshow Alley with the Mental Health Team's pop up tent!

It warms my heart to introduce the next lovely little lady who has been one of the ringmasters behind the Mentally Fit EP project.

Drum roll please for Ang Cordon...

Ang is a loving mother to 3 grown ups, a doting grandmother to 4 gorgeous grand babies, you might have seen her gorgeous face at many weddings as she's also a wedding celebrant, she is our local Expert By Experience Officer 3 days a week for country health SA for the whole of South Australia, Ang is a keen advocate and committee member on the Bendigo Bank board, and has truly been my "rock" and "key" who has supported our vision to creating a mentally fit EP right from the very beginning in 2014.

She could be our role model for our mentally fit EP; because she sure is a loveable clown juggling many balls and entertaining all who meet her.



Ang has been instrumental in our project by applying for grants from local businesses to support our vision of our mentally fit EP and our non for profit organisation, she has very successfully nominated our project for state and national recognition, she's shared our vision with her huge network, is using the eyre peninsula as an example of how a few passionate consumers can make a huge difference so other areas across SA can replicate, and has kept the chair person (me!) sane!

Here's Angs 3 tips for keeping mentally fit;

1. Early morning walks with friends sharing stories.
2. Cooking.
3. Playing with grandkids.

I have no doubt that the relationship between these two key organisations who actively promote mental health prevention measures as well as providing support for those unwell, will continue well into the future.



Country Health SA's Team Leader and Mental Health Nurse Carol-Ann Stanborough opening MIFSA's annual art exhibition during MHW 2015.

Mental Health Week 2014—Tunarama Ambassador Lain Montgomery

At the same time that our Life's a Circus Gala Dinner was creating the "big shebang" to Mental Health Week 2014, the amazing Lain Montgomery, Tunarama Ambassador 2015, was busy raising money for West Coast Youth and Community Support and advocating mental health awareness messages on the Eyre Peninsula.

How lucky our community is to have Lain who pretty much single handedly created a week full of fun and free activities (and some a gold coin donation) for mental health week 2014.

Lain generously donated her time to jump on board the Mental Health Week 2015 committee, and her timetable from the previous year was used as a template for everything created this year.



The Eyre Peninsula is a hidden gold pot of treasures and this little lady is one of its gems!!!

Welcoming the gorgeous Tunarama Ambassador for 2014 onto our page today...drum please for Lain Montgomery.

This inspiring soul is not only a full time teacher at Saint Jos, shaping the lives of our young people, but she also generously donates her time, artistic flair and infectious personality behind the scenes on Countless committees to bring visions like mental health week 2015 to life.

Lain raised over \$20000 last year to enable The non for profit organisation West Coast Youth and community Support to create events that promote mental fitness on the Eyre Peninsula and Lain is the mastermind behind all of our beautiful posters and advertising campaign for Mental Health Week...

She rocks my socks and makes my role as the chair of the committee a piece of cake; while bringing many laughs along the way!!!

Lain s 3 tips for mental fitness include;

Eat well

Find something wonderful in your every day

Spend time with people you love

Xxx

Lain played a MASSIVE role in the promotion and creation of posters for MHW 2015, kindly donated half of the profits from her art exhibition at the Circus Lounge to Mentally Fit EP project and gathered raffle items!

SUNDAY 3 RD OCT	MONDAY 6 TH OCT	TUESDAY 7 TH OCT	WEDNESDAY 8 TH OCT	THURSDAY 9 TH OCT	FRIDAY 10 TH OCT	SATURDAY 12 TH OCT
"HAPPY MENTAL HEALTH WEEK!" Give a compliment to someone you know! Get a compliment from someone you know! Get a compliment from someone you know! Get a compliment from someone you know!	"Happy Long Weekend!" Use this time to appreciate your surroundings. Get a photo you haven't taken, or haven't taken for a while. Superheroes, Port Lincoln or Coffin Bay, National Park, Island's Hill, Glen Forest Animal Park, the jetty...	11.00am Official Opening of Mental Health Week at the Port Lincoln Library 21 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0488 235 430 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	7.00am Bowling class at Moolah 21 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0488 235 430 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	11.00am Community Photo in the Park on the Forebush at Moolah 21 participants max. Supported by Country Health SA Local Health Network: Mental Health Clinic 20 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0488 235 430 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	10.00-12.30 Yoga class at Moolah with Nadia Chelverick 20 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0488 235 430 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	10am Summer Night and Ball with Right and happy way to start a Saturday Yacht club to start dinner and back. Dogs, bikes, prams, etc all welcome! 24 Buses and egg sandwiches for breakfast at the park! Club on return. Participants to also receive a raffle & cancer ball machine for \$50.
"Pick up something in the kitchen that you love about your favourite food!" Make time to start off your week on a happy note!	1.00pm Coffee meet workshop at Anywhere with Lain Montgomery & Ruth Ryan 20 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0427 532 747 or 0488 235 430	11.00am BBO Jumping Castle and activities for youth at the Port Lincoln Youth Club 21 participants max. Gold coin donation	12.00pm Movie Screening: Castle and activities for youth at the Port Lincoln Youth Club 21 participants max. Gold coin donation	12.00pm Movie Screening: Castle and activities for youth at the Port Lincoln Youth Club 21 participants max. Gold coin donation	"Make sure you get outside during your lunch break!" Even if it's just 10 minutes to breathe in some fresh air! OR "Pick up a cup and treat yourself to a coffee or tea and a healthy snack!"	"Relax in the busy realities that we are a part of we often don't take the time to relax. This is your time to kick back and forget about the world for awhile."
"Get a good for the week ahead. What is something you want to achieve? It may be to spend more time with friends or family, to spend more time on your own, to finish an artwork or to feel healthy... whatever it may be set it today and follow it through!"	"Spend your night with someone you love, or make the effort to talk to a friend you haven't spoken to for awhile."	8.00pm Movie: author bookshop at Moolah Drive 20 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0488 235 430 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	8pm DVD bookshop at the Leisure Centre 21 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0427 532 747 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	8pm Movie: author bookshop at Moolah Drive 21 participants max. Secure a spot with Lain on 0488 235 430 Bring a drink bottle and towel Gold coin donation	8pm Summer Night and Ball with Right and happy way to start a Saturday Yacht club to start dinner and back. Dogs, bikes, prams, etc all welcome! 24 Buses and egg sandwiches for breakfast at the park! Club on return. Participants to also receive a raffle & cancer ball machine for \$50.	8.00pm LB it a Circus Gala Ball at the Port Lincoln Race Course. Hosted by the Eyre Peninsula Mental Wellbeing Program group SOLD OUT!! SOLD OUT!! SOLD OUT!! To be placed in a waiting list please contact West Coast Youth and Community Support on 0883 3002



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ICAN—Funding for a Community Development Officer

After the success of Lain Montgomery's amazing Mental Health Week activities in 2014 capped off with the Life's a Circus Gala dinner on Saturday the 11th of October which raised \$24,000, it became evident to Jo Clark that West Coast Youth and Community Support would need to employ a Community Development Officer to bring these two contributors visions to life.

Jo applied for a Community Partnership Grant created by the Innovative Community Action Network.

ICAN matched the amount raised by the Life's a Circus Gala dinner, which allowed for WCYCS to employ myself 1 day per week over a 1 year contract from November 2014 to November 2015.



My story—How my Role Changed by Life

Dedication the The life's a Circus Committee, ICAN, WCYCS, Mental Health Week Committee, William Glasser Institute.

This time a year ago I made the decision to quit my full time job after deciding that there had to be more to life then driving an 1 1/2 a day 5 days a week to and from work and living life in an exhausted daze; I was tired, stressed and bordering on living an anxious life again.

With no job to go to I focused my time and energy on fulfilling my dream of creating a Life's a Circus Gala dinner with my wonderful committee of helpers.

Now, a year on, I'm embracing my ever growing baby belly (I'm now 36 weeks pregnant), working 2.5 days a week to create a Mentally Fit EP (although today is my last day before I go on maternity leave!), have created a beautiful home with my husband, meditate daily, walk or get my body moving daily, am eating healthier then I ever have before (thanks to my babies cravings) and am feeling mentally fit and full of energy.

This role has changed my life on both a professional and personal level. If I think back to the person I was a year ago, I can barely recognise myself. This year I have taken on challenges that have opened doors that I could've never imagined possible. A year ago I couldn't speak in front of a group of people without having a severe panic attack and having my speech written down word for word that I would clutch on to like a lifeline. Two weeks ago during MHW I presented our project to Rotary and all I had to go on was a few key dot points and my passion. Four years ago I suffered from severe anxiety and depression and couldn't even get out of bed—plus I didn't have an assertive bone in my body—this year I chaired our MHW committee, delegating roles, managing tasks, creating timelines, liaising with key stakeholders, managers and CEO's in our community. 10 years ago I left the Eyre Peninsula in pursuit of a teaching degree at the University of Adelaide, and after 3 1/2 years of study, I decided teaching wasn't for me. Up until 12 months ago, I still had no idea where my career was going, I just knew that I had a burning desire to create awareness around mental health and now I'm studying with the William Glasser Institute to become a Take Charge of Your Life course facilitator so that one day, I can follow in Sue Berry's footsteps and deliver the course to empower our community on the Eyre Peninsula.

I know what I want, I know who I am, I am proud to say that I have built my personal resilience by stepping out of my comfort zone, staying firm in what I believe in, accessing local services and investing in my self love and care through meditation, yoga, Mana Mamas and the like, to become a mentally fit mamma—after we I need to practice what I preach and if Mental Fitness is my message—then I too must ensure that I actively pursue what I preach.

Without the ICAN grant, I would not have had the opportunity to fulfil my dream and for that, I am forever grateful. Thank you ICAN.

The BIG Dream/Vision; A Mentally Fit EP

Aim: empowering individuals to take charge of their lives to build a mentally fit connected community.



Eyre Peninsula Wellbeing Program administrated by:

West Coast Youth and Community Support



Two roles:

Community Development Officer and Take Charge of Your Life Course Facilitator



Job Descriptions

Community Development Officer

- Provide administrative support (promotion of course, recruitment of participants, preparing resources, attending presentation, debriefing and feedback, catering, updating mailing lists) to the Take Charge of Your Life Course Facilitator.
- Promote support services on the EP.
- Create connections with local businesses, services and community groups to promote mental fitness.
- Manage updates on the Eyre Peninsula Mental Wellbeing facebook page.
- Advocate mental fitness in the local media.
- Creating and distributing Life's a Circus newsletter (quarterly).

Take Charge of Your Life Course Facilitator

- Preparing and delivering Take Charge of Your Life Course.
- Venue booking.
- Liaising with managers/organisations for group bookings.
- Gathering information/feedback and reporting.
- Data entry for certificates.
- Liaising with the William Glasser Institute of Australia.
- Creating workshops and ongoing support for participants.
- Promotional fliers/banners/hand outs.
- Presenting content to sponsors and partners.



Take Charge of Your Life Course and Building Connections with Local Community Services and Businesses.

Take Charge of Your Life—My Partner in Crime

A huge passion of the Life's a Circus Gala dinner committee was to deliver a mental wellbeing program into Cummins, Tumby Bay and Port Lincoln; little did we know at the time that such a course already existed, and that course was called Take Charge of Your Life.

It just so happened, that Sue Berry, the Family Counsellor at WCYCS had successfully completed the 5 levels of training required over an 18 month period to be able to facilitate this course.

The stars, once again aligned.



I was recently asked to speak at the World Mental Health and Happiness Summit run by the William Glasser Institute (the creators of the Take Charge of Your Life course). Bette Blance, the NZ President for the association quoted that what we're doing on the Eyre Peninsula "is leading the way" on the world stage from the institute's perspective, and that they are using our data, course materials, power point slides, be the ringmaster of your life theme, and banner to evaluate the program.

This clip is a dedication to Sue, everything she's taught me, how's what has learnt over the past 11 months with her has changed my life and my thinking and behaviours, how she has helped me to take charge of my life and become an empowered mama, and the impact that she is having on our local community and on a world stage with her dedication, passion and commitment to sharing William Glasser's messages.

Meet the Experts

 Carleen Glasser *UTC/GMT: 0:00 5pm PST/8pm EST	 Jamie Schwandt *UTC/GMT: 1:00 6pm PST/9pm EST	 Kim Oliver *UTC/GMT: 2:00 7pm PST/10pm EST	 Eric Hollen *UTC/GMT: 3:00 8pm PST/11pm EST	 Monika Korra *UTC/GMT: 4:00 9pm PST/12:00am EST	 Peter Gotzsche *UTC/GMT: 5:00 10pm PST/1:00am EST
 Bob Votruba *UTC/GMT: 6:00 11pm PST/2:00am EST	 Robert Wubbolding *UTC/GMT: 7:00 12pm PST/3:00am EST	 Kirsty Traeger *UTC/GMT: 8:00 1:00am PST/4:00am EST	 Rick Hanson *UTC/GMT: 9:00 2:00am PST/5:00am EST	 Hugh Norris *UTC/GMT: 10:00 3:00am PST/6:00am EST	 Debbie Joffe Ellis *UTC/GMT: 11:00 4:00am PST/7:00am EST

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae8J3l8PJPM&sns=fb>



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Mental Health Week 2015—Sideshow Alley

There was something for everyone at the Mentally Fit Eyre Peninsula's Sideshow Alley held on Friday the 9th of October during Mental Health Week 2015 in Port Lincoln.

Young and old were in for a treat with a wide range of activities - from having a go at a drumming circle, to learning how to play the ukelele with the Cellar Folk Club, a tea ceremony kindly put on by the Mana Wellbeing Centre and The Healing Essences, to creating something with clay with Country Health SA, writing a mental health message and having a photo with ABC Open's Emma Pedler, having a card reading with Jaz from Bliss Spiritual, soaking in the energy from Trudi's mandelas from Meraki Dreams, colouring in a mandala with Centacare tent, trying a tasty shazlick with Uniting Care Wesley, FREE lucky dip with Outback and Country Health, young living oils with Awaken on Eyre, bower therapy with Breathe Balance, badge making with CAMHS, CarersSA, learning about kinesiology with Zest Kinesiology, LIVE music showcasing local musicians organised by Pete the Greek from Atlantis Studios, GOLD COIN donation snags by Rotary, fairy floss and donuts by EP Catering, flips, tricks and workshops by the AMAZING Parkour all the way from Adelaide, gold coin donation BOUNCE on the Bouncing on Eyre gladiator castle, gold coin donation facepainting by two girls from the local theatre group the Passionis Productions, learn about Take Charge of Your life and play volleyball with the West Coast Youth and Community Support Team and create a sunflower with a message with Healing Hearts and Minds!



AMAZING day with over 1,000 passing through from 11am-3pm!

A HUGE thank you to Lynne Dobbie Photography, who with 4 kids in tow, kindly donated her time to capture these gorgeous memories from the day!

<https://www.facebook.com/Lynne-Dobbie-Photography-1581510372128501/>

Thank you also to our major sponsors for the event - the Cummins Bendigo Bank, SA Mental Health Coalition, the Innovative Community Action Network and West Coast Youth and Community Support.

And of course, a HUGE thank you to the wonderful people who were the heart and soul of bringing this week together - the amazing MHW committee.

To Ang Cordon (Expert by Experience Officer Country Health SA), Simone Gilliam (Country Arts SA), Lain Montgomery (Tunarama Ambassador 2014), Jo Clark (CEO West Coast Youth and Community Support), Pete the Greek (organised the live music), Ron Higgins (Cellar Folk Club), Leonie Green (CarersSA), Sue Berry (Family Counsellor WCYCS), Sam Cope (WCYCS), Emma Shepherd (Outback and Country Health), Jane Cooper (Country SA Primary Health Network) - THANK YOU!!!

Mental Health Week 2015



ABC Open pop up tent happiness messages.



The Cellar Folk Club showed up in force with their ukuleles.



Jaz from Bliss Spiritual Healing was flat out giving palm readings!



The Uniting Care Wesley team cooked up free shaz-zicks and asked people what mental health meant to them.



Cummins business Breathe Balance joined the fun with FREE bowen therapy and badge making!



The Country Health SA team were flat chat helping people create their zentangles and clay masterpieces!



The FREE spiral meditation walk at Awaken on Eyre during MHW.



The Mana Mama group was welcomed into Mana Wellbeing and The Healing Essences pop up tent for a tea ceremony!



The School of Yoga and Mana Wellbeing Centre teamed up to deliver FREE yoga and meditation on Wednesday of MHW.



The Streaky Bay business Zest Kinesiology joined the side-show alley fun!



All dressed up at the Circus Lounge.



Sue Catt with her creation at the FREE Port Lincoln Bendigo Bank Healing Hearts and Minds art workshop.



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Hope—Looking to the Future

If there's one lasting impression that I am taking from my time at West Coast Youth and Community Support as the "ringmaster" for the Mentally Fit EP project, it's HOPE.

Hope that when we hit our darkest hour we can make choices to slowly claw our way back to the light.

Hope that by speaking openly about my experience with depression, anxiety and suicide that when a mate says I'm not coping we go oh dear, this is serious, let me take you to the doctor.

Hope that we can choose to create stillness in the face of our chaotic lives simply by turning off our phones to disconnect with the external world and reconnect with ourselves.

Hope that people might give meditation, yoga and many other forms of holistic healing a shot, because with practice, these become important mind exercises that strengthen our capacity for resilience.

Hope that one day, the stigma is gone, so our child never knows what it's like to hide an illness....

Hope that West Coast Youth and Community Support receives enough funding to keep this project and vision going past November 2015 when the current funding raised from the Life's a Circus Gala Dinner and ICAN grant runs out.

Hope that I now know that there's SO much support out there on the Eyre Peninsula—just look how many pop up tents were present at the sideshow alley and how many businesses and generous souls donated their time, and put business aside during mental health week to create AWARENESS.

Hope that our project is making a difference in the lives of individuals across the Eyre Peninsula.

Hope that I will be able to return to a role I love so much in the future, so that I can continue to grow personally and professionally and to share our vision.

Hope that whoever does step into my role, finds it as fulfilling, challenging, and life changing as I have.

Hope that together, we can work towards one goal—a Mentally Fit EP.

See you in 7 months!!!

Today is my last day at WCYCS before going on maternity leave!

But have no fear, this most certainly is not the last that you'll hear from me!

My "scheduled" return date is for July 1st 2016.

Thank you for being apart of this wild ride!

I am truly grateful beyond words, and as tears roll down my cheeks as I sign off from my final newsletter, I have nothing but hope, gratitude, honour, pride, and sincere happiness for the opportunity I have been given over the past 11 months.

I know this isn't goodbye, I know this is just the start of something pretty special on the Eyre Peninsula and that this is just the beginning of a lifetime career for me.

See you in 2016!



My husband and I with our baby bump at the firework finish to MHW 2015—the Circus Lounge.