



Media Release

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Great Tasmanian tractor trek hits the road for mental health

A group of retired tractor enthusiasts and farmers are about to hit the road, driving their beloved machines over 300km to raise awareness of mental health issues among men.

Starting Monday, February 12 about 20 drivers – all aged 60 and over – will roll through regional towns between Wynyard to Launceston in Tasmania’s north over five days, raising money to support *beyondblue* services across the country.

Tasmanian Tractor Trek organiser Gary Bramich said the unusual convoy, travelling at a steady 25km/hr, was sure to turn heads and would be great conversation starter among locals.

“Most of us come from a farming background and we love our tractors,” Mr Bramich said.

“We thought this would be a good way to help *beyondblue* and raise awareness in this area.

“Mental health is big issue among men, and it’s an issue in regional areas.

“We just hope it gets people talking about mental health right across Tasmania.”

The tractor trekkers have urged Tasmanians to support the cause and their goal to raise \$1000 for *beyondblue*.

On average, one in eight men will experience depression in his lifetime while and one in five will experience anxiety.

The 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Causes of Death report showed men were at least three times more likely to die by suicide than women.

***beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman** thanked the tractor trekkers for making mental health a talking point, especially among men and in regional Tasmania.

“What a great way to get locals talking about mental health,” Ms Harman said.

“Mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety can affect anyone, but the good news is they are treatable.

“There are simple actions you can take to start working on getting better and staying well. The hardest part, for many people, is asking for support.

“Talking about mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety helps to break down stigma. The more we talk about it the more comfortable people feel about asking for support.”

The tractor trekkers will be travelling through Somerset, Burnie, Penguin, Ulverstone, Deloraine and Longford before finishing in Launceston.

To support the trekkers, go to bb.org.au/tasmanian-tractor-trekers

For media interviews and information, please contact the *beyondblue* media team.

Mental health professionals area available 24/7 at the *beyondblue* Support Service – 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3pm-12am ADST) or email responses (within 24 hours).

Contact: *beyondblue*

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