



Media Release

June 30, 2018

West's Tigers coaching juniors on mental health

West's Tigers NRL club has called on fans to wear blue this Sunday and help smash the stigma around mental health as they take on the Gold Coast Titans in their match supporting *beyondblue*.

This year, West's Tigers is working with junior teams – players, coaches and volunteers – to highlight the vital role that good mental health plays in sport.

West's Tigers key players including Kevin Naiqama and Matt Esenhuth are working with the club's rising stars on fitness and skills, but also ensuring young players understand how to stay mentally healthy and that it's okay to ask for support if they're struggling.

In 2013 the club was affected by suicide with the death of promising young forward Mosese Fotuika and has since invested to ensure players and staff have access to mental health support.

West's Tigers spokesperson Shaun Spence said good mental health was a key priority across the club, including for the young stars coming up through the ranks.

"Our club has been through some really difficult times and we know from experience how important it is to put your hand up early and get support when you need it," Mr Spence said.

"Asking for help is often the hardest part, but it shouldn't be and that's why we're getting our juniors thinking and talking about mental health early.

"We want kids to know it's okay to talk to someone if they're not coping and to ask for help.

"And like physical injuries, the earlier they get support the sooner they can get back on the ground and feeling their best. Talking about mental health is a game-changer."

Through its partnership with *beyondblue*, the club has put mental health in the spotlight among NRL fans through the annual *beyondblue* game.

This year, West's Tigers have called on fans to wear blue to Sunday's game and to start a conversation in their own sports clubs, with their mates or their family, about mental health.

***beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman** applauded the West's Tigers for taking such a proactive step to foster good mental health across the club and among young players and fans.

"What better way to get young players talking about mental health than through a conversation with their sporting heroes," Ms Harman said.

"These professional players are showing kids that asking for support is not a sign of weakness, in fact it's the opposite – it shows real strength.

"*beyondblue* is proud to partner with West's Tigers for Sunday's game."

beyondblue is West's Tigers' charity partner for this Sunday's game at Leichhardt Oval, with kick off at 2pm.

Contact:

Cheryl Balfour – (03) 9818 9253 / 0434 356 775
Cheryl.balfour@beyondblue.org.au

beyondblue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
beyondblue Support Service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au