



After five years in operation, a decision has been made to wind up The Banksia Project. Unfortunately, the organisation was unable to sustain its unique peer-to-peer community run model with the limited people and financial resources it had been able to muster. While disappointing for all involved, we are extremely proud of the work done by the Banksia team and the impact it has had on men's lives. More than 300 men have participated in the growth room programs since inception, with many participants reporting improvements in their ability to cope and feeling more positive after attending the groups. In addition, a number of participants specifically communicated that the experience significantly changed their lives.

Following on from this decision, we have some exciting news about agreements reached with likeminded organisations to continue our mission of supporting mental health initiatives across the broader community, current participants of growth room program and the Old Boys community.

Members of the Banksia Board have been in discussions with charities Gotcha4Life, Lifeline Central West, Movember and Wesley Mission Queensland about continuing to support Australians through the early intervention stages of mental health. Following these discussions, it has been agreed that The Banksia Project will pass on all its mental health tools and programs to these organisations for use in current and future initiatives where relevant. Their combined knowledge and experience in the mental health sector gives us great assurance that the materials provided will be instrumental in building on and scaling effective mental health initiatives that will benefit the broader community.

In addition to this, the Board has reached an agreement with Lifeline Central West and Gotcha4Life to support the current Growth Rooms that wish to continue. This gives our community comfort that this important service will continue and sustain The Banksia Project's legacy in making a difference to the lives of so many men across Australia. With one of The Banksia Projects biggest impact areas being the Central West region, Lifeline Central West will continue supporting Growth Rooms in the Orange, Mudgee and Dubbo areas and look to expand across the region as resources become available. Likewise, our long-standing relationship with Gotcha4Life will see their team supporting our existing Sydney community and possibly scaling the Growth Rooms program nationally to reach even more men in need.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those involved in The Banksia Project over the last five years. We would not have been able to achieve the things noted without their passion, commitment, and willingness to give their time.

While Banksia will have ceased, the OIU is committed to continuing its support of mental health with both its members and the broader community. Our vision is to provide multiple layers of support across 'Starting the Conversation', 'Learning the Skills' and 'Sustaining the Actions' through these partners. We will share more details in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, please look after yourselves and stay safe. If you or someone you know needs support, please reach out to your network of family and friends, an ex-classmate or someone in your community and let them know.

Kind regards

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