



“Come as an individual, share as a group, leave connected.”

What is the Banksia Project?

The Banksia Project is a mental health association that focuses on de-stigmatising mental health in the male community and empowering men through community led forums and groups to actively engage in positive mental health practices together. The Banksia Project connects charities and mental health services to the community in an engaging and practical way through two specific channels: The Garden Rooms and The Growth Rooms.

Why we do it?

The Banksia Project is made up of men who believe this approach is necessary and are confident it can make a difference to the biggest killer of men under 45. The Black Dog Institute reports “In 2014, over 2800 Australians died by suicide and around 65,000 made an attempt. Suicide is the most common cause of death in Australians aged 15-44yrs and rates appear to be increasing”. This statistic is also backed up by research by Beyond Blue that shows that 75% of suicides are by men.

The Banksia Project aims to provide an avenue for men to provide their own solution and support for each other to try to counter this trend.

To achieve this The Banksia Project will look to go beyond awareness and de-stigmatisation into a coordinated and community based approach focused on direct solutions and individual empowerment. This will be backed up and complemented by well-respected and well-established mental health service providers and health care professionals.

The Banksia Project believes recent initiatives raising awareness has been a step in the right direction this awareness-only model needs to be built on. We believe there needs to be ownership and responsibility taken by the community on this issue to support the health care system in reducing the statistics. Awareness without action is an opportunity lost.

The challenge we have set The Banskia Project is to align the strength of men with a wellness model that works with the natural idiosyncrasies of the male psyche, allowing them to achieve happiness and fulfillment in all aspects of their own humanity, this will in turn help foster greater communities, families and workplaces.

The Banksia Project wants to help create a community of men who work together to be holistic men who have engaged with their ability to show emotion without fear.

The Garden Rooms

The Garden Rooms are mental health open forums that occur once a quarter. The Garden Rooms run by The Banksia Project and in partnership with existing mental health institutions will play host to live speakers and facilitated Q&A. Each forum will invite unique speakers who have either a lived experience or are a leader in their industry who has overcome adversity with the view to provide compelling and constructive stories for the audience attending. Their personal stories will be the foundation for further discussion and Q&A.

The open forums will take a varying format, with a general flow of events like the following:

- Facilitator introducing the evening – what is The Banksia Project;
- Identifying stigma and discussing mental health;
- Lived experience speaker sharing positive recovery;
- Facilitator drawing out key learnings for audience;
- Education on Mental illness identification and warning signs;
- Second speaker;
- Facilitator drawing out key learnings for audience;
- Panel of experts respond to group discussion facilitated Q&A

By sharing personal stories, these evenings will equip attendees with a better understanding of what mental health and wellness is, the warning signs and how others have recovered. The Garden Rooms will be free and open to all members of the community including; Men, Women, Partners and Families.

The Garden Rooms are currently being hosted by Saint Ignatius' College Riverview on behalf of the Old Ignatians' Union.

The Growth Rooms

The Growth Rooms are monthly facilitator led community support groups which have a focus on mental health prevention and recovery. The Growth Rooms will begin with a pilot of 6 months with each growth room being managed by the group facilitator or group members. The location of each growth room will also be defined by the facilitator or group members who have established a place where the group can meet regularly (once per month) to participate in the growth rooms.

The focus of each Growth Room Session will be divided into two sections; *Education and Facilitated Group Discussion*.

The Banksia Project objectives that underpin the direction of The Growth Rooms are:

- To lead cultural change in the male community of Australia with a focus on Mental Health and wellness (prevention and recovery)
- Create community lead groups of men that are positively engaged in the Mental Health practices that benefit themselves and others
- Collaborate with leading mental health institutions in establishing community based and research supported solutions for Men's Mental Health
- Facilitate research with accredited research institutions in the delivery of data that underpins the constant revision of progress for The Banksia Project.

Education

The education element of the Growth Rooms will focus on delivering prescribed information to each Growth Room based on a topic each week. This topic will either be delivered by a member of the group or by an expert invited into the group to discuss a particular topic based on their expertise. In the event an expert is invited to present, they must leave The Growth Room once the first half of the session is over, unless they are a member of the group.

The education topics that the Growth Rooms will look to provide include but are not limited to:

- Mental Health Illness recognition and treatment solutions
- Positive mental health practices
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Nutrition
- Positive Acceptance, Gratitude, Resilience, Forgiveness
- Spirituality, Meaning, Purpose
- Relationship management
- Stress Management
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Self esteem
- Holistic self-expression

Each session will cover at least one of the above topics. These topics and information provided will be supported by research and/or expert advice.

These sessions will begin each Growth Room going roughly 45 minutes, beginning 7pm - 7:45pm.

Facilitated Group Discussion

The group discussion will be facilitated by the trained facilitator of the Growth Rooms. This process will focus the group on sharing, similar to a model as seen in Alcoholics Anonymous. Each sharing session will be an opportunity for group members to discuss their lives and positives or negatives that they may be experiencing with an opportunity for the group to give feedback if the participant is willing to receive it.

Additional Elements

Accountability Partner: Accountability partners will be allocated within each group at their discretion. The accountability partner will be a two individuals in a group who are dedicated to keeping in regular contact with each other and supporting each other as a “gym partner” might do, in positive mental health exercises such as; Meditation, exercises, gratitude practices, seeing a mental health professional. The accountability partner is someone who will keep the other person accountable in improving their mental health.

3 on 3: The 3 on 3 concept that exists will be the role of each group member to identify three men in their lives that they have given permission to, and to whom permission has been granted, that they can call and discuss anything around mental health or a problem they may be experiencing at any time. The

intention behind this is to establish a clear support network between peers, group members or members of the community with regard to any individual man's mental health.

Material: Material will be made available from The Banksia Project Growth Room that outlines information that pertains to the following:

- Weekly One pager take home work - Revision on weeks discussion and positive practices
- Tip Sheet - Mental health
- Brochures for Mental Health Organisations
- Phone number for Life Line and other immediate support organisations
- Books for further learning

Mental Health Referral Network

The Banksia Project will have a dedicated network of Mental Health Professionals who have been approved and vetted by The Banksia Project Advisory Board as practitioners that can be referred to by The Banksia Project for members or members of the community who attend a Banksia Project event.

Rules and Guidelines

The Growth Rooms will be governed by strict rules and guidelines which are put in place to ensure a safe and respectful environment for participants to attend and share. These rules and guidelines will be developed by The Banksia Project.

Facilitators & Training

Facilitators of The Growth Rooms and The Banksia Project will be trained in the skills required to facilitate The Growth Room, ranging from:

- Affective Listening;
- Group Process;
- Identification of issues or members at risk;
- Awareness of warning signs or conditions;
- How to manage risk or suicide; and
- How to report to supervising practitioner or clinician.

Facilitator supervision

Facilitators will be required to report to the Mental Health Practitioner or Supervisor after every Growth Room to update on the process and progress within the session.

In addition to supervision, Facilitators from each group will be required to attend a facilitator group once per quarter to discuss and learn from other facilitators what works and doesn't work.

Training

Training will occur over a two days as defined by The Banksia Project, managed by a professional with experience and qualifications in the relevant fields.

Research

Research correlating to the Growth Rooms will be conducted throughout the pilot and beyond as The Banksia Project looks to continually refine and improve the service offered to the community. The intention to remain flexible and focused on delivering the best practice and impact will underpin the research and the direction of The Banksia Project into the future. Research will be undertaken by the research partner of The Banksia Project: UTS Health and Psychology Unit.

Research will be outcomes focused, qualitative focused groups that will address; Attendee satisfaction, age and what they were hoping for, along with other areas of interest as prescribed by UTS Health and Psychology Unit.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board for The Banksia Project will consist of mental health and health professionals who are highly qualified and experts in their field. The advisory board will provide professional guidance on The Banksia Project and elements pertaining to their individual experience. Each board member will come from a different and relevant field of expertise relating to The Banksia Project overall mission.

Current Advisory Board Members:

- Rachael Murihy - Director UTS Health & Psychology
- Dr. Tim Sharp- Chief Happiness Officer, The Happiness Institute

The Banksia Project will look to source additional members from the following fields; Nutrition, Mindfulness and Meditation, Medicine.

The Banksia Project- Organisation

The Banksia Project is a committee which forms part of the Old Ignatians' Union of Saint Ignatius' College Riverview.

The committee is made up of men from different backgrounds who add a professional skill set to the direction of The Banksia Project.

Committee Reporting and duties

The Banksia Project committee meet once a fortnight, each tasked with individual roles to carry out prior to the next meeting. The Chair of The Banksia Project guides the direction of the roles for each committee member.

The reporting duties of The Banksia Project are directly to the Old Ignatians' Union. The Banksia Project must report any activities that it wishes to undertake and provide regular reports of what these will cost and the outcomes achieved.

As a registered association, The Old Ignatians' Union facilitates all financial transactions on behalf of The Banksia Project.

Committee members

Committee members are made up of individuals from the following skill sets:

- Marketing
- Media
- Finance
- Law
- Graphic Design
- Communications
- Mental Health

Each committee member is expected to attend meetings when they occur with apologies for non-attendance delivered to the chair of the committee within 24hrs of the meeting occurring. All committee members volunteer their time freely for The Banksia Project.

Mission Statement

The Banksia Project provides support and services to help men understand mental health and identity in the community through healthy and emotionally balanced choices.

Vision Statement

To raise the standard and create a world with men who are powerfully empowered.

Goals

- Lead cultural change in the male community of Australia with a focus on Mental Health and wellness, prevention and recovery
- Create community lead groups of men that are positively engaged in the Mental Health practices that benefit themselves and others
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Growth Objectives

The Banksia Project will aim to achieve the following growth objectives:

6 Months

- 8 Facilitators trained in first 6-month pilot period
- 8 Growth Rooms launched by the end of pilot period
- 3 Garden Rooms
- Secure commitment from the GPS Schools behind The Banksia Project

Year 1

- 15 Facilitators trained in the first year
- 15 Growth Rooms active
- 4 Garden Rooms per annum
- Launch the Banksia Ball with the GPS Schools
- Establish registered charity status
- Grow The Banksia Project into Melbourne and rural areas in NSW and VIC

Year 3

- 50 trained facilitators
- 50 Growth Rooms activated
- 4 Garden Rooms per annum per location defined by The Banksia Project
- Unite alumni and other relevant associations across Australia

Market Strategy

The Banksia Project marketing information distribution will begin at a grass roots level through the use of social media and social networks that reflect:

- Population density;
- Target market density;
- Proximity to mental health service providers; and
- Existing social networks.

Uniting the Alumni Network

The Banksia Project has identified the strength of the alumni network in Australia as a pivotal launching point for gaining traction and members. The Banksia Project will unite the alumni network from the respective private schools of Sydney and then expand this into other parts of Australia.

Communities that will be targeted

The Banksia Project has identified key areas and communities that will be targeted due to their influence on the male community and community at large. These communities have been defined as:

- Alumni Unions;
- Sporting Teams;
- Finance;
- Youth Mentor's;
- Mining & Construction;
- Rural;
- Homosexual;
- Indigenous;
- Military;
- Police & Ambulance;

The intention with each community will be to engage with well-known identities to encourage engagement in the discussion of mental health for men.

Thank you for your consideration,

Contact Information

Bryan Coleman

Chairman

The Banksia Project

E: bryan@thebanksiaproject.com.au

N: 0439 721 015