



## Rural Alive & Well Inc

The Rural Alive & Well Inc Outreach Support Program was developed approximately 4 years ago as a result of drought that had started to take serious affect on the farming communities throughout Tasmania. RAW as it is commonly known is a not for profit organisation formed to raise awareness of men's wellbeing with its motto; 'Talk to a mate' widely muted!

RAW is Governed by a 9 member Board that has a strong balance of Professional and Community experience. The current Board along with previous members have been instrumental in securing funding from DoHA, DHHS and DPIPWE during periods of hard economic times, their hard work, dedication and belief in the RAW model continues to place RAW in a good position to provide solid services to rural Tasmanians.

RAW began with 1 worker in 1998 that covered the whole of the Southern Midlands & Central Highlands as well as setting up what is soon to be suicide prevention & intervention programs with 6 rural outreach workers state-wide. The RAW office is situated at Melton Mowbray and is staffed Monday to Friday from 10am – 3pm. There is 1 fulltime Business Manager and 2 part-time office staff. RAW operates 24/7 with on-call shared between the outreach workers.

Our objective is to provide quick response through early intervention to people at risk of harm and to promote help seeking avenues for individuals, communities experiencing mental health and welfare issues.

The principal object for which RAW is established is to create a strong, resilience and capacity of men, their families and the community to react to challenging life experiences with particular emphasis on mental health with a special focus on suicidal tendencies.

RAW outreach workers are mobile each day which means they are continually within reach of individuals and communities. This provides a quick response and on many occasions outreach workers have called in and visited people who are isolated and struggling only to find a crisis in progress. Outreach workers vehicles are sign written and are highly visible which helps promote and identify its presence. Workers are very aware that people are sensitive about personal issues and offer to meet them in a more appropriate setting if desired; confidentiality is assured to all communities and clients.

Whilst RAW initially began as a result of drought, currently the program has switched part of its focus on supporting the hard hit Forestry industry. In November 2010 RAW employed its first worker designated to assist the Forestry communities, within the next month RAW will expand to have 3 designated workers who will be based throughout Tasmania.

Referrals come from many sources and it is vital that networks are continually developed with both service providers and communities. RAW has strong connections with Mental Health services, local Municipal Councils and many NGO's throughout the state. Traditionally RAW has operated in the Southern Midlands, Central Highlands and Glamorgan Spring Bay municipalities. RAW responds to urgent calls outside its funded areas and refers to other services when required.

RAW has survived tough economic times and recent restructures have paved the way for its future. Whilst drought & forestry have provided much of RAW's work it is critical that the program grows in its services and maintains credibility.