



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2018**

**BRINGING THE BLACK DOG TO HEEL WITH A TOUR TO THE TOP END**

More than 60 motorcycle enthusiasts from across WA will depart from Perth on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August on an epic adventure to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention.

The Black Dog Ride to the Top End will roll out of Yahava Koffee in the Swan Valley at 8am and cover around 4600 kilometres over nine days before reaching its final destination in Darwin, meeting up with hundreds of likeminded Black Dog Riders from other regions celebrating the power of conversations in mental health recovery.

Along the way the riders, ranging in age from 33 to 70, will be stopping at schools and community centres at Jurien Bay, Northampton, Broome, Fitzroy Crossing and Kununurra, before converging in Katherine with more than 200 other riders from around Australia for the final leg into Darwin on 18 August, celebrating the power of community conversations in mental health recovery.

Black Dog Ride began in Western Australia in 2009 as a ride to raise awareness of depression, and has evolved into a national health promotion charity involving thousands of Australians with lived experience of mental illness and suicide who inspire the nation with their passion for preventing suicide.

Previous rides, all organised and conducted by people with lived experience, have included trips around Australia, through the Red Centre and even an epic journey across the United States in 2015. Black Dog Ride does not receive any government funding.

Funds raised during the trip will be used to benefit grass roots community mental health projects throughout Australia. So far the Black Dog Ride has raised more than \$2.5 million for mental health and suicide prevention programs nationwide, including Lifeline Australia's Crisis Support Chat service, Men's Sheds, training 1000 youth in teen Mental Health First Aid, and funding a youth outreach bus in regional WA.

For more information or to donate to the Black Dog Ride visit the website - <http://www.blackdogride.com.au/> and view a video about Black Dog Ride to the Top End 2018 here: <https://youtu.be/6ikm6iGKL0M>

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## **KEY MESSAGING**

### **Black Dog Ride to the Top End 2018**

**Date of Activity: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2018 to 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

**Location: Australia Wide**

#### *Depression and Suicide:*

- Suicide is the leading cause of death in Australians under the age of 45
- 8 Australians take their lives every single day, that's 1 life taken every 3 hours
- It is estimated that there is a suicide attempt every 10 minutes in Australia
- 80% of all suicides in Australia are by men, but the number of women suiciding is climbing
- 1 in 5 Australians will experience mental illness every year
- Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in Australia
- Depressive disorders are the most common identifiable risk factor for suicide

#### *Black Dog Ride to the Top End 2018:*

- Black Dog Ride was established in 2009 by WA businessman Steve Andrews who rode his motorcycle solo around Australia in 26 days to raise awareness of depression
- Black Dog Ride was incorporated as a national mental health charity in 2014
- Since 2010, Black Dog Ride has organised annual motorcycle rides in every corner of Australia to engage communities around mental health and suicide prevention
- Black Dog Ride's community health projects are amongst the largest of their kind in Australia that are organised, conducted and involve participants with lived experience
- Participants will carry the Black Dog Ride Mascot 'Winston' on their bikes – a soft toy black dog named after Sir Winston Churchill, who famously diarised about being hounded by the 'black dog of depression'. Winston helps Black Dog Riders start conversations about depression
- Black Dog Ride encourages people experiencing mental illness to reach out for support to friends and seek assistance from medical practitioners

#### *Support for those in crisis:*

- People experiencing a mental health crisis can call:  
Lifeline Crisis Support on 13 11 14; Samaritans on 135 247; Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467; Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978

**-END OF KEY MESSAGING-**

