

MENtal Brekky

St Patrick's College Ballarat was delighted to host more than two hundred and twenty guests for the inaugural MENTal Brekky which aims to raise funds to support current students from families where someone is suffering mental health issues. The attendees were especially privileged to hear from guest speaker and 2010 Australian of the Year Professor Patrick McGorry who spoke about the battle in Australia to acquire significant funding and support to overcome and treat many mental health issues.



The inaugural business breakfast was organised in honour of Old Collegian Chris Yeung (SPC 1976-81) who died in 2015 after battling his own mental health problems. Chris was just 51 years old when he died in 2015. He had struggled with psychosis since his twenties, ultimately defying it on his own terms. During this period Chris was an employee, a business owner, a good friend, a loving partner and a father to two magnificent young men – Oliver (SPC 2005-10) and Elliott (SPC 2009-14). Chris was genuinely concerned for other men who were suffering from a mental health disorder. He considered himself lucky with a supporting and loving family. He personally knew of others who were not so fortunate. He had strong empathy with these men and yet, tragically, chose a path used by so many of his contemporaries. Even with this close family support, Chris rarely engaged in open and frank conversations about his illness with his friends.



Former classmates of Chris rallied together following his passing to organise the event which they hope will help break down any stigmas surrounding open and frank discussions about men's mental health. One of Chris' best mates from school, Simon Dwyer (SPC 1976-81) delivered an emotional address about their close mateship and how he wishes they had spoken more about the trauma Chris was enduring.

Representatives from dozens of Ballarat businesses contributed generously to the event which was run under the auspices of the St Patrick's College Foundation. It is expected that the breakfast will raise around \$25,000 which will be used to assist current students and families. Research indicates that around 23% of all children in Australia have a parent who suffers from a mental health disorder.

Mental illness continues to be something that is not discussed openly and readily in society. The MENTal Brekky aimed to address that issue by ensuring Chris' legacy is one that encourages us to acknowledge the impact of mental

illness and its impact upon society. In doing so, we hope that men can open up about their experience and share, without prejudice, their journey and hopes for the future.

The MENTal Brekky was held in the OCA Pavilion from 7am-8.30m on Friday, August 12. The College would particularly like to thank the organising committee comprised of Simon Dwyer, Paul Callahan, Peter Flynn, Denise Fitzpatrick and Stewart Hynes for their great work in organising the event. We would also like to thank College Legend Steve Moneghetti for donating his time as Master



of Ceremonies. We would also like to thank key sponsors and donors including Retire Invest Ballarat, the Retire Invest Advice Group, the Regent Cinemas, the Rabbiters Hut, Tanya Daniels The Good Guys, Priceline Pharmacy, Mt Langhi Ghiran Winery, Henderson Mowers and Chainsaws, Telstra Shop Ballarat and 13th Beach Golf Links.

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