



TABLE TALK

IN THE SPACE OF FOUR YEARS THERE'S BEEN A HUGE EXPANSION OF A PROGRAM HELPING MEN MEET OTHERS JUST TO SIT DOWN OVER A MEAL AND TALK.



just come as insurance policy for when times are tough.

“The first step towards a Table can be nerve wracking and it can take real courage. I stumbled across one of the founders in a local event, having moved up to Sydney looking for a friend and within a month I was working with them.”

SINCE FEBRUARY 2019, 40 PER CENT OF TABLES HAVE NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED IN REGIONAL AND RURAL AREAS – THERE ARE 145 NOW WITH 100 IN NSW AND EXPANDING INTO OTHER STATES.

Anthony said there were tables in the lower Hunter with new groups to start at Muswellbrook and Scone at the end of August. A table has just been set up in Narrabri and there are two in Tamworth and three in Armidale.

“There’s a lot of enthusiasm in regional and rural areas,” he said.

“We stated going to bushfire recovery areas and more likely the ‘stoic’ man is alive and living in those settings, but we found men are willing to come forward given the right atmosphere.

“The spirit in the room has been palpable – not just a man coming for himself, but for others. In transitioning communities, there is uncertainty about the future and having guys to share concerns is important – just a chance to come together.”

Coal mining communities have been undergoing work changes and Anthony said changing work practices had not

helped the situation.

“Back in the day, the underground guys were tightknit and there was a great deal of trust.

“With more above ground, some groups may do their huddles in trucks on the way to work but there’s a lot of time spent in isolation and many of these guys are away from families.

“There are no psychologists in the group - unless they are there by choice for company. We have a good yarn and feed and get to meet other fellows. We encourage men not to talk about things like footy and politics – just talk about how they’re feeling.”

The average age range for members is about 45 to 65 and there are now a thousand men joining Tables during any particular month.

THERE WILL BE MEETINGS AT THE ROYAL HOTEL AT SCONE ON AUGUST 30 AND AT THE MUSWELLBROOK RSL ON AUGUST 31 TO ESTABLISH NEW MEN'S TABLES IN THOSE LOCATIONS.

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO THEMENSTABLE.ORG.

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