



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – FRIDAY 13th JULY 2018

BRINGING THE BLACK DOG TO HEEL WITH A TOP END TOUR

More than 60 motorcycle enthusiasts from across Victoria and Tasmania will depart on Friday 10th August for an epic week long interstate adventure to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention.

The VIC/TAS leg of Black Dog Ride's Top End 2018 mental health campaign will roll out of Castlemaine at 9.30am and cover around 4000 kilometres over seven days before reaching Darwin, where they meet with hundreds of likeminded Black Dog Riders from around Australia to celebrate the power of conversations in mental health awareness.

The Black Dog Riders, men and women ranging in age from 28 to 79, will be meeting with communities in Mildura, Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, fostering a safe space to talk about mental illness and suicide and encouraging help seeking behaviours. On Friday 17th August, more than 300 Black Dog Riders from around the country will meet in Katherine to ride en masse for the final leg into Darwin. Black Dog Ride's Top End 2018 Finale Celebration will be held at Darwin's iconic Croc Cove.

Black Dog Ride began 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 suicidal ideation who inspire the nation with their passion for preventing suicide. 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. 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 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, Samaritans Crisis Support Service, and local Headspace Centres.

For more information or to donate to 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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-END OF MEDIA RELEASE-



KEY MESSAGING

Black Dog Ride to the Top End 2018

Date of Activity: Friday 10th August 2018 to 18th 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 increasing
- 20% of Australians will experience a 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 awareness 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
- Black Dog Ride is raising funds to support mental health projects, particularly in regional Australia
- 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-