

Black Dog Ride (raising awareness of depression and suicide prevention)

VIC 2016 - The Milk Run

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TUESDAY 6th SEPTEMBER

Dogs Moo For Milk Crisis

Black Dog Riders are an empathetic bunch. When they heard about the plight of the local dairy industry and its impact upon the mental health of many of the farmers, their families and communities, they knew it was time to act.

Black Dog Ride, now in its seventh year, is a national suicide prevention charity whose mission is to raise awareness of depression and suicide prevention. Every year Black Dog Ride organises a long distance ride aimed at engaging communities around mental health awareness. This year, Victorian Coordinator Ric Raftis and over 50 Black Dog Riders will wear cow onesies and ride to dairy regions to shine a spotlight on an industry in crisis and the domino effect it has on their communities.

Ric says, "In any industry experiencing a financial crisis, it's going to impact upon people's mental health and our dairy industry is no different. We want to make sure people are aware of the support systems available to them if they are feeling down or stressed."

Black Dog Ride's VIC 2016 Milk Run, from the 23rd to the 29th October, will depart from Bendigo to Swan Hill, Halls Gap, Warrnambool, Frankston, Bairnsdale, and Wodonga and finish with a Grand Finale in Shepparton.

Funds raised by Black Dog Riders during VIC 2016 will support Mental Health First Aid's Teen Program training in Australian secondary schools, and continue to build the capacity of Lifeline's online Crisis Support Chat service.

People can register to ride in or donate to Black Dog Ride's VIC 2016 Milk Run via Black Dog Ride's website: <http://www.blackdogride.com.au/vic2016>.

For more information about Black Dog Ride's VIC 2016 Milk Run email Ric Raftis at vic@blackdogride.com.au or phone Ric on 0407-412-100.

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KEY MESSAGING

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General Messaging Points:

- The suicide rate in Australia equates to one death every three hours, or eight deaths per day
- More than twice as many people die from suicide in Australia than in road related deaths
- 75% of all Australians who die by suicide are men
- Suicide amongst men in regional communities is twice as high as metropolitan areas
- Unemployment, financial stress and isolation are risk factors for mental illness and suicide
- More than 600 people die from suicide in Victoria each year
- Over one million Australian adults and 100,000 youth experience depression annually
- 1 in 5 people will experience depression in their lives; 1 in 4 females and 1 in 6 males
- Black Dog Ride is a national suicide prevention charity which has raised over \$2,200,000 for mental health services since 2009
- The VIC 2016 Milk Run is a week-long motorbike ride in Victoria organised by Black Dog Ride to raise awareness and funds for depression and suicide prevention
- Fundraising from VIC 2016 benefits Lifeline Australia and Mental Health First Aid Australia
- Mental Health First Aid Australia will use the funds to continue the Black Dog Ride funded roll out of their MHFA Teen Program which has trained 714 adolescents since 2015
- Lifeline will be using the funds for building the capacity of their online Crisis Support Chat service which assists over 40,000 people experiencing suicide or a mental health crisis annually

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