

## **NJERENDA TO PUT SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH IN COMMUNITY**

**THE Echuca and Moama communities are being encouraged to come together for a Mental Health Community Barbecue and yarning circle on Friday, to connect and share resources in the wake of COVID-19 lockdowns.**

Working Together For Health worker Chris Cooper said the aim is to bring people together in a casual environment to have a yarn and find support and resources around mental health issues.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be really hesitant to open up when it comes to mental health,” he said.

“What we’re doing is providing a space for conversations to happen, and for resources, both Njernda and external, to be accessed for people who choose to utilise them.

“Now that we’re able to get together in groups after COVID, it’s important for Mob to come together and support one another, and we think that sometimes keeping that process as simple as possible is the most effective way.

“COVID was a really isolating time for many people, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is no exception to that, so it’s important to take the opportunity while we can to get together to discuss a really important issue – mental health.”

Mr Cooper said Njernda health professionals including staff from the hospital, will be on hand to assist anyone needing help, and to provide guidance on external resources if necessary.

“It’s putting a face to the names, having a face-to-face chat with healthcare professionals who are in the know and in a position to help – whether that’s within Njernda or an outside organisation that they can help you connect with,” he said.

“Information and resources will also be available onsite for those who may not be comfortable asking for help in a face-to-face capacity.

“We’d really love to see everyone, from our Elders to our youth, come along and have a yarn, have a feed and get involved in the day.”

The Mental Health Community Barbecue will be held on Friday 5 August from 11am to 1pm at Apex Park Hall.

**For further information, contact Chris Cooper on 03 5480 6252 Ext 1.**

