

Media statement

From: Bill Lane, Media Manager, Mercy Health – 0477 720 337

To: For Alesha Capone Wyndham Star Weekly

Date: Monday 19 April 2021

Hygiene packs gratefully received

Up to 200 patients in need will receive essential hygiene packs following a generous donation on Friday from the Mercy Health Foundation with the support of its business partner Bank First and the Pinchapoo charity.

The packs which will be given to patients who may be homeless, isolated, survivors of family violence, or experiencing any range of struggles, contain a range of items such as shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant and sanitary pads.

The packs were delivered to the WMH Emergency Department.

Mercy Health Foundation General Manager Julie Owens said the organisation was immensely appreciative.

“We could not be more thankful when partners such as Bank First and their own philanthropic partners, including Pinchapoo, identify a significant community need and act accordingly,” she said.

“As a values-based organisation, Mercy Health is motivated by compassion and hospitality – we are always seeking ways to extend our care and services to the most vulnerable. These items will be put to good use,” Ms Owens said.

Emergency Mental Health Senior Clinician Godwin Dhliwayo said the Emergency Department often saw mental health patients who were experiencing a range of struggles which might include financial stress.

“Having even a small burden lifted such as the availability of free hygiene items could be just the answer to help that person get through a particular day,” Mr Dhliwayo said.

Pinchapoo is a charity partner of the Bank First Community Fund and was created in 2009 with the objective of 'pinching' hotel toiletries and personal hygiene products included in the cost of accommodation, to be redistributed to thousands of disadvantaged women, men and children nationally each year.

Michelle Bagnall, Chief Executive Officer at Bank First said: "As a member-owned bank we exist for the purpose of serving those who serve others. Our members are nurses, teachers and allied health workers who day-in, day-out aspire to make the lives of others, better. The Pinchapoo story is incredibly inspiring, and our partnership with them is another way in which we support our members and the communities in which they live.

"We hope the donation to Werribee Mercy Hospital and other Victorian emergency departments helps to make a small but important difference in people's daily lives," Ms Bagnall said.

As part of the program, Bank First Community Fund will support the provision of approximately 25,000 basic hygiene packs. The packs are created by an entirely volunteer workforce and sent to over 600 organisations, community groups and government institutions nationally.

Adam Alsbury, Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer at Bank First explained, "The Bank First Community Fund was created to help the organisation live its values of care and compassion through supporting charity partners who helped make a positive impact on marginalised members of the community".

Mercy Health Foundation supports Mercy Health to care for those in need at every age and stage of life.

To find out more or to support the Mercy Health Foundation through community action, fundraising or a donation visit: <https://www.mercyhealthfoundation.org.au/>

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