

THE NATIONAL POLICE FOUNDATION SECURES MENTAL HEALTH GRANT FROM THE COMMONWEALTH PROCEEDS OF CRIME ACCOUNT

Scott Weber – Company Secretary, National Police Foundation

The National Police Foundation, the charity that has run the Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance in conjunction with the Police Federation of Australia (PFA) and donated almost \$1,000,000 to police legacy organisations over the past nine years, has secured a \$750,000 grant from the Commonwealth Proceeds of Crime Account (POCA) to build a web portal focussed on the mental health and well-being of police officers.

Announcing the grant in the lead up to the 2019 federal election, Minister for Home Affairs and former Queensland Police Officer, Peter Dutton MP, said,

“Our law enforcement officers, first responders and national security officers are there 24/7 to respond to unfolding events across Australia and the world. These officers experience events and situations the rest of us hope we never need to go through. We rely on them, many of whom dedicate their lives to making our communities safer. It’s therefore fitting that we reinvest proceeds of crime back into supporting these officers, allowing them to both do their jobs more effectively and lead happy and healthy lives”.

The project is planned to build a comprehensive and sophisticated web portal, with specific content that will address a wide range of matters germane to mental health/wellbeing, including:

- links to other appropriate websites and activities, both nationally and internationally;
- information for family and colleagues;
- information on the eradication of stigma; and
- mental health stats and facts.

The portal is intended to be a repository for a series of training/educative videos, that will build upon the important concepts raised in the PFA produced telemovie *Dark Blue* (due for release in July '19) and the song *Graduation Day* (written by Australian recording artist John Schumann). The videos will also link with the issues identified in the handbooks, *Head Notes* and *A Cop in the Family*, likewise produced by the PFA as part of an earlier POCA Grant.

DARK BLUE



True stories
behind the
thin blue line

PIPER FILMS

PIPER FILMS AND POLICE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA PRESENT 'DARK BLUE' JEFF LANG EMMA BEECH
WITH PETA SHANNON TERRY CRAWFORD PETER RODGERS PRODUCTION DESIGNER BEVERLEY FREEMAN CASTING ANGELA HEESOM PRODUCTION MANAGER VICKI PIPER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOHN SCHUMANN MARK BURGESS MARK CARROLL PRODUCED BY MIKE PIPER WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY COREY PIPER



An Australian Government Initiative

Figure 1 'Dark Blue' movie poster

It is envisaged that these short videos would leverage off the telemovie and use clinical psychologists, other subject-matter experts and police who have also suffered from like issues, to explore the various problems that arise in the movie and to identify strategies for dealing with them. The short videos will include:

- mental-health risks for police;
- depression;
- anxiety;
- destructive thinking disorder;
- acute stress disorder;
- post-traumatic stress disorder;
- mental health and relationships;
- mental health and finances;
- mental health and drugs;
- mental health and alcohol; and
- suicide.

The campaign and web portal will also explore various:

- self-help strategies;
- pathways to help;
- self-help/interactive capabilities; and
- family engagement.

The portal will be a 'one stop shop' for the numerous activities taking place in the mental health space, not only in every police jurisdiction, but also in the wider emergency services space, both here and overseas. It is planned to be a "live" activity, with the capacity for podcasts and the like, and will continue to be built and refined with contemporary material during the life of the Grant and hopefully beyond.

This project will also link with the other initiatives announced by the Minister in April 2019, including the 'BlueHub' support network (see accompanying article by John Laird, President of the Police Association Victoria). The \$2.5 million grant to the PFA to work with the Police Association of Victoria and the AFP was made available through Health Minister Greg Hunt and former Victorian Police Officer Jason Wood MP, who was recently announced as the Federal Government's Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs.

The 'BlueHub' will establish a centre of excellence in mental health treatment for police, which is planned to be complemented by satellite support services provided and funded by each state and territory; creating a national framework to provide the right, evidence-based services.

We thank the government for their continued commitment to addressing the mental health issues facing Australia's police and look forward to the development of the web portal over coming months.