

**\*\* UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12.01AM MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2020\*\***

Monday, 5 October, 2020

### **RACV and Orygen partner to help young people with mental ill-health access employment and education services in regional Victoria**

Young people with mental ill-health, who live in regional Victoria, will be supported to achieve their education and employment goals thanks to a new three-year partnership between RACV and youth mental health organisation Orygen.

The partnership will establish a Youth Individual Placement and Support Centre of Excellence at Orygen, which will expand and drive the implementation of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programs for young people at sites across regional Victoria.

Under the IPS model, education and employment services are embedded alongside clinical practice within youth mental health services. Orygen research has demonstrated this can dramatically improve employment success rates, with young people participating in IPS programs being up to three times more likely to achieve employment outcomes than those participating in other employment support programs.

RACV's General Manager of Social Impact and Corporate Communications, Louise Steinfort, said the Orygen partnership will help young Victorians negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of mental health support and employment opportunities.

"There has been significant disruption to the lives of young people caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting the mental health and wellbeing of many young Victorians. RACV recognises the need for more mental health services in regional Victoria that support young people and that's why we've partnered with Orygen," Ms Steinfort said.

"We have a responsibility, now more than ever during the COVID-19 crisis, to support young people experiencing mental-ill health. This partnership with Orygen aims to expand services and support young people who are experiencing mental ill-health, with finding employment and educational opportunities."

Orygen's associate director of employment and education partnerships, Gina Chinnery, said IPS was the most evidence-based and effective form of employment support for people experiencing serious mental illness, but was out of reach for many young Australians.

"We are very excited to partner with RACV to launch our youth IPS Centre of Excellence to provide expert support to mental health services, industry and the IPS workforce" Ms Chinnery said. "This will ultimately help more young people with mental ill-health who live in regional Victoria to find work or study opportunities."

Penelope, a young person who has found employment through an IPS program said before she joined the program she was incredibly stressed out about many things that were happening in her life and they all related to finances.

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“I now have two jobs that help me support myself as well as my family members. I am grateful for the support I have received from this program,” she said.

Ms Chinnery said the first youth IPS site in regional Victoria was expected to come on line in early 2021, to support young people experiencing mental illness find employment or continue their studies.

“Our research tells us that young people with mental ill-health have the same aspirations as other young people - they want to work and study,” she said. “This partnership with the RACV will go a long way in realising these goals for young people in rural and regional Victoria.”

**##ENDS##**

#### **About RACV**

*Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.*

#### **ABOUT ORYGEN**

*Orygen believes that all young people deserve to grow into adulthood with optimal mental health. Everything they do is focused on that outcome. Most mental health disorders begin between the early teens to the mid-20s. One in five young people will have experienced a depressive episode by the time they turn 18. Orygen believes in treating early and focusing on recovery. Pioneering reform to deliver real-world practical solutions. Never settling for anything less than what young people need and deserve. Orygen research is world-leading, impactful and creates change. Working directly with young people, their families and friends, Orygen pioneers new, positive approaches to the prevention and treatment of mental disorders.*