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For immediate release

Media release

Creating mentally healthy workplaces through GoodYarn

GoodYarn, a successful rural mental wellness programme for the rural sector, is now launching the GoodYarn Workplace Programme for businesses across New Zealand.

“The first step in addressing mental health in the workplace is being able to talk about it,” says Dana Carver, Chairperson of the Good Programmes Trust. “GoodYarn has been huge in the rural sector, increasing awareness of the signs and symptoms of common mental illnesses, and building confidence to identify it, talk about it, and know how and where to get help.”

GoodYarn is a practical starting point for businesses and organisations wanting to address mental health and wellbeing. New Zealand’s award winning rural mental health programme got over 5,000 farmers and rural professionals talking about mental health. The fundamentals of the rural programme have been reworked to suit New Zealand businesses; rural and urban.

Mental health in New Zealand is front of mind right now. Workplaces that support mental wellbeing are better for staff, employers and customers, with lower stress also meaning less staff turnover and a more positive environment. The Health and Safety at Work Act now specifically requires a duty of care to protect mental health from harm due to work, and the Institute of Directors, in its latest edition of BoardRoom, has listed “mental health and wellbeing in the workplace” as one of the top five issues for 2019.

The programme gives employers a product which can easily be embedded into business as usual and importantly, places employees firmly in the driving seat to create the workplace culture they want to be part of.

From the 5000 people participating in the Programme so far, feedback is clear:

- It is helping them create a more caring workplace culture;
- It provides personal development to staff;
- It is helping staff to keep themselves well; and
- It is helping them create a sense of contribution and collaboration.

Twenty-two organisations are currently licenced to deliver the GoodYarn programme across a range of industries.

Hayley Laughton, Safety and Wellbeing Co-ordinator for Otago Polytechnic, one of the newest licencees, describes the Programme as “meaningful, down to earth and shows how every person can make a difference.”

Fleur McCorkindale, Risk & Wellbeing Advisor, Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), another new license holder, says GoodYarn is something their people had been looking for. BCITO had identified poor mental wellbeing as a critical risk to their business and wanted to do something about it. “The in-house, peer to peer aspects of GoodYarn was particularly appealing to our staff and management,” she says.

By the end of 2020, the Trust hopes to have 80 businesses and 15,000 workers across NZ participating in the GoodYarn programme.

“In this way having “a GoodYarn” will create culture change at an organisational level and collaboration will create culture change at an industry level,” Carver says.

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For more information contact: GoodYarn Programme Manager, Michelle Thompson on 021 2347413.

Photo: Snapshot of the new GoodYarn Workplace workbook

Note to editors:

The Good Programmes Trust was established in 2017 and gained charitable status in July 2018. The Trust has five trustees and is responsible for overseeing the GoodYarn Programme.

The GoodYarn programme was first offered in 2015 as an initiative for rural communities and rural professionals, especially those involved in the business of farming. Demand for, and feedback from, the rural model led to the development of a workplace model in 2018.

- GoodYarn Rural is aimed at farmers and professionals engaging with farmers.
- GoodYarn Workplace is aimed at helping staff, teams and colleagues and can be used in all organisations, both rural and urban.

www.goodyarn.org