

# Media Release – 7/8/18

## Help for WA Self Help and Support Groups

*Western Australia's Self Help and Support Groups are set to be strengthened by new funding announced today*

Thousands of Western Australians could benefit from new funding announced today by ConnectGroups, the peak body for WA's Self Help and Support Group sector. The *Give it Forward* grants program, thanks to the support of Lotterywest, will provide \$300,000 over two years to WA Self Help and Support Groups.

ConnectGroups' 617 member groups provide peer support and services that reach an estimated 72,000 Western Australians annually. The groups play a key role in health promotion, advocacy, community inclusion, reduction of stigma, and the prevention of mental distress.

Antonella Segre, CEO for ConnectGroups says, "It is fantastic to have received this funding from Lotterywest and we're very excited to be able to offer these grants to those members who work so hard with little or no external resources to provide support to other Western Australians, and who were unable to access funding through our *Pay it Forward* small grants funded through the Mental Health Commission."

"Our member groups are largely volunteer-operated and self-funded, so these much needed funds will support WA's Self Help and Support Groups to grow, strengthen, reach more people, innovate and continue to provide their invaluable support and services across the state."

"Our grants are unique in that we broker all funds directly so the Support Groups don't need to handle any funds or do acquittals. We also offer assistance with getting grant applications ready, and provide mentoring and support throughout the process from start to finish."

ConnectGroups Patron Professor Lyn Beazley AO FTSE added, "As a former Chief Scientist of Western Australia and as the present Patron of ConnectGroups, I am thrilled that Lotterywest has supported this grant for our *Give it Forward* program. The grant builds on the wonderful work of ConnectGroups and will allow us to provide much needed assistance to those facing health issues."

The program is set to launch in mid-August with the first round of grants expected to be released mid-November. ConnectGroups membership is free for all eligible WA Self Help and Support Groups. For more information or to find a Self Help or Support Group, contact ConnectGroups on 9364 6909.

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