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## Awards recognise 'exceptional' people, organisations and initiatives in mental health space

19 October 2022 | Dione David



The 2022 ACT Mental Health Month Awards acknowledged outstanding community members, groups and organisations in the mental health space. Photo: Nathan J Lester.

Fourteen outstanding community members, groups and organisations in the mental health space have won awards across eight categories and five scholarships at the annual ACT Mental Health Month Awards.

The sector-wide initiative was coordinated by the Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) ACT in partnership with the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network and implemented by the ACT Mental Health Month Advisory Committee.

Mental Health Community Coalition ACT acting CEO Corinne Dobson said the Awards recognised those devoted to building positive mental well-being in our communities as community sector employees, researchers, people with lived experience of mental ill-health or carers.

Officiated by *Region* group editor Genevieve Jacobs, the ceremony included speeches by Minister for Mental Health Emma Davidson and Mental Health Month Community Ambassador Yenn Purkis.

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Among the many deserving award-winners, the Research Evaluation Award went to OzHelp Foundation Health in Gear (HiG) Program.

HiG is a health and wellness initiative focusing on transport and logistics workers, including the second-highest occupational group at risk of suicide – truck drivers.

Long and irregular hours, poor diet, lack of exercise, fatigue, relationship pressures, isolation, regulatory burdens and tight deadlines are all risk factors contributing to this statistic, compounded by COVID-related pressures and rising fuel costs.

The program provides access to information and support, including a roadside early intervention/prevention health check, 24/7 telephone support and counselling, website resources, a podcast series and ambassadors who promote the program.

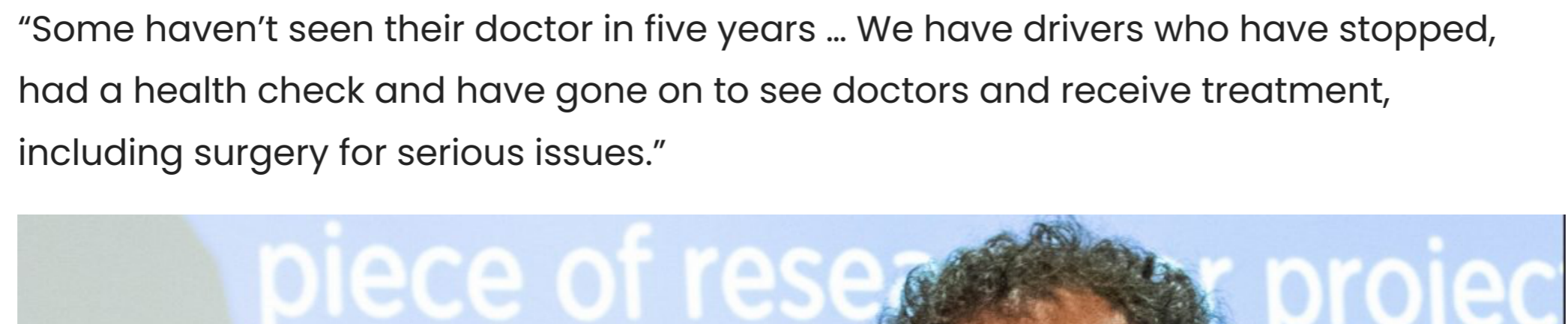
OzHelp's Frank Arsego said the key offering was the ability to "get out onto national highways around Australia and pull truck drivers over" for mental and physical health checks.

"At OzHelp, we don't wait for them to come to us, we go to them," he said.

"In the past 12 months we have been on the Hume Highway, Victoria and Queensland and developed a working relationship with Coles and Coca Cola working with their drivers.

"We've come into their space but they are all prepared to stop. We make the first connection and as time has gone by, they've found us out there again and they've stopped.

"Some haven't seen their doctor in five years ... We have drivers who have stopped, had a health check and have gone on to see doctors and receive treatment, including surgery for serious issues."



Minister for Mental Health Emma Davidson with OzHelp's Frank Arsego. Photo: Nathan J Lester.

Dalai Byambasuren took one of three MHCC ACT Training Scholarships worth up to \$1000.

These grants are for smaller organisations whose main work is with marginalised and minority population groups to undertake MHCC ACT's mental health training.

In Ms Byambasuren's native Mongolia, where she worked in the police force, the mental health discussion brings shame and stigma.

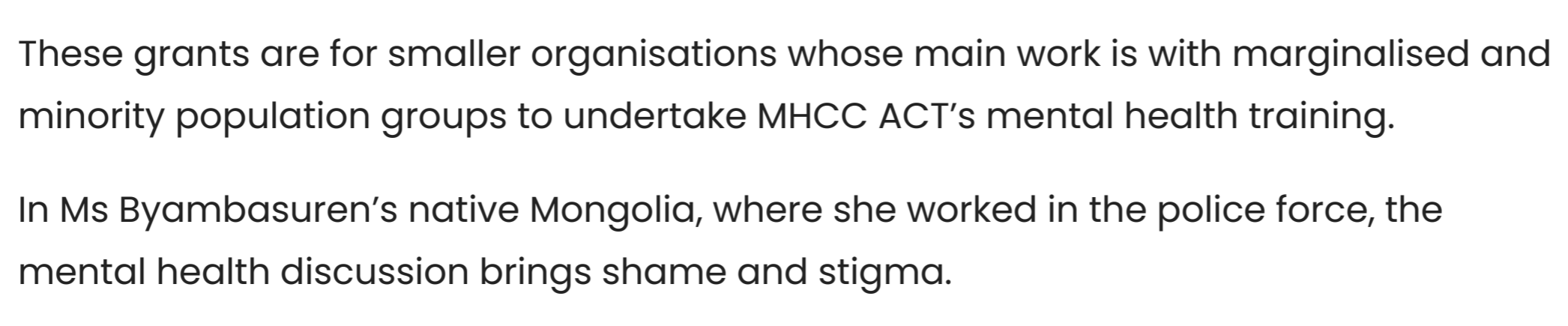
"We don't talk much about mental health at home. It's a prohibited topic – it is taboo for most Mongolians," she explained.

Challenging those taboos by moving to Australia four years ago to study in the field, language and social network barriers led to Ms Byambasuren experiencing mental health struggles first-hand.

"I felt so isolated. It was really a struggle with depression and anxiety," she said.

"But counselling showed me the person I am.

"When I finished my diploma, I started to think about what I can do for my community which is growing at the moment."



Emma Davidson with Dalai Byambasuren. Photo: Nathan J Lester.

After graduating with a Diploma of Community Services, Dalai recently started the Mongolian Association of Canberra ACT to support fellow Mongolians and empower them to break down mental health barriers in their communities by sharing her lived experiences.

"It's a small community and our cultural background stops people from speaking out. They feel they need to hide bad things, keep it inside themselves even when they are struggling, which makes it worse," she said.

"I try to encourage them to come to me with questions and concerns about mental health.

"There are no words for this in the Mongolian language. There is nothing from the community perspective. Someone needs to deliver that information across the language barriers."

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The 2022 ACT Mental Health Month Awards winners were:

- The Mentally Wellbeing Community Award: (Individual) Matt Breen and (Organisation) Wellcare
- Innovated Person-centred Supports Award: Lisa Anderson
- The Research Evaluation Award: OzHelp Foundation's Health in Gear (HiG) Program
- Mental Health Carer Award: Marie Johnson
- The Community Connection through Recovery Award: Millie Corin
- Lived Experience Ally Recognition Award (LEARA): Tim Daly
- Leadership through Lived Experience Award: Joel Brogden
- David Perrin Award: Liam Adams.

The scholarships winners were:

- ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Scholarship: Felicity Maher
- Rufus Scholarship: Elise Mariee Crouch
- Three MHCC ACT Training Scholarships: A Gender Agenda, Mental Health Foundation (ACT), Dalai Byambasuren.

A full list of nominees can be found [here](#).

The awards formed part of **Mental Health Month ACTI** – an opportunity to raise community awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions and promote positive mental health and well-being.

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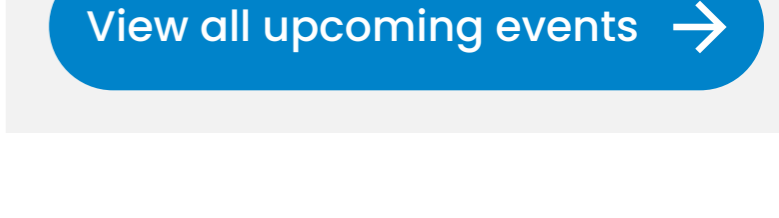
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Red Wig Challenge - Walk for Sick Kids

22 Oct 2022 All day

Virtual - walk from anywhere!

**Viewfinder: Photography from the 1970s to Now**

22 Oct 2022 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Exhibition Gallery, National Library of Australia (Parkes Place - Canberra ACT 2600)

**Mabo v Queensland (No. 2): 30th Anniversary**

22 Oct 2022 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

National Library of Australia

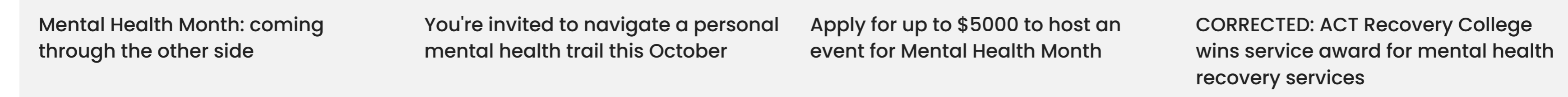
**Kenneth Rowell: Designer for the Stage**

22 Oct 2022 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Treasures Gallery at The National Library of Australia - Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

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