

# Stamping out the curse

SHARING life stories and experiences is how one group of inspirational people are helping to stamp out the curse of mental illness.

Riverina Bluebell is a volunteer group that is working to promote mental health and wellbeing in the region.

Based in Wagga, the small group has evolved from its beginnings three years ago.

Founding member and farmer from Wantabadgery Chris Wilson is no stranger to depression and the devastating effects it can have on sufferers and their family and friends.

Having been through depression himself, Mr Wilson is a proud advocate of Riverina Bluebell. He is dedicated to highlighting the importance of managing stress to prevent the onset of depression, especially among those in the Wagga area.

"I was so inspired by my own recovery that I knew I had to do something about it," Mr Wilson said.

"I know how bad it is and I know personally what it's like. It is so hard to ask for help when you're there, but once you make the effort to ask for help recovery can be quite swift.

"From my own experience,

your world can turn around instantly."

One way to ease the burden of mental illness is by coming together, meeting new people and talking amongst friends.

Riverina Bluebell organises a number of events throughout the year where people from all walks of life come together to have a good time.

On Friday, October 16, the group has organised an inspirational and motivational evening at the Wagga RSL.

Lead singer of The Choir Boys and beyondblue ambassador Mark Gable will be guest speaker on the night along with former Wallaby captain Nick Farr Jones and former rugby union legend Enrique "Topo" Rodriguez.

These three men will be sharing their own stories of courage, hope and the different pathways they have taken to get help.

Event organiser Tanya Friend said the event is a timely one for many people across the Riverina as many farmers are suffering the effects of severe drought.

"Although our message is to all, it could not come at a better time for farmers who I would say are truly feeling the heat right now," Mrs Friend said.

Tanya and Chris have urged



riverina bluebell

MEMBERS of the Riverina Bluebell cricket team are out for a day or laughs earlier this year. The group is organising a night of nights at the Wagga RSL Club with high-profile personalities coming to speak about their experiences and ways of managing stress.

Tickets are \$10 each and bookings are essential.

For more information contact Tanya on 0417 069 061 or head to Riverina Bluebell's website [www.riverinabluebell.org.au](http://www.riverinabluebell.org.au).

men, women, town people and country people to come along to the Wagga RSL at 6pm on

October 16 for a night of inspirational speaking, entertainment and all-round fun.

## Impressive crowd at Hay

A WOPPING yarding of 46,000 was recorded at the opening of the Riverina store sheep sale at Hay last Friday.

While the prices weren't extreme, producers still managed to outlay about \$3 million as a crowd of about 1000 people pushed ewe prices to \$141.

With the region's spring season in the balance, the large numbers surprised local agents.

Buyers came from as far away as Cunnamulla, Queensland, and Tasmania, but most sheep sold went to local and Victorian buyers.

The top-priced ewe was sold locally to Hay lamb producer Daryl Hurst, who picked up a line of 173 SAMM ewes, September-October 2007-drop, Darbi blood and April shorn ewes for \$141. Top price of the day went to vendors Bert and Liz Mathews of Bedarbidgal, Hay.

In the 2008 ewe pens, Greg and Helen Rogers from Yarto, Booligal,



A MASSIVE crowd turns out for the opening of the Riverina store sheep sale at Hay.

scored the top price when their line of 405 head, April-May drop Alama blood and August shorn sold for \$132.

Continuing on from the previous sale, Mr Rogers' wether lambs showed promise when they sold for \$64.50.

Most young ewes sold from \$90-\$122, with the earlier sales looking cheap in comparison to later on in the day as buyers

found their feet.

In an impressive feat for the old ewe market, some lines sold up to \$30 above their meat value.

Five-year-old ewes sold up to \$80.50 twice, for shorn breeders from Burrabogie and Yamba, while the balance of old ewes made mostly \$65-\$80.

Woolly Merino wether lambs sold to \$64.50 while shorn lambs sold to \$64.50.

## Wagga ag institute welcomes new leader onboard

NSW Industry and Investment has welcomed John Oliver as the new director at Wagga's Agricultural Institute.

Mr Oliver brings experience to the role, including almost 40

years in the cereal industry. Mr Oliver said he was looking forward to continuing to raise the profile of the rural community in southern NSW by ensuring that research is undertaken at a level that could be

properly integrated into farming practices.

"One of the big challenges now is preparing the farming community for a changing climate," Mr Oliver said.

"I will also be working hard with our key

partners ... to benefit the broader farming community."

He replaces Alison Bowman, who has been promoted to director of productivity and food security research based at Orange.

## Healthy Soils, Healthy Landscapes

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Participants will receive up to two FREE soil tests including top and subsoil.

Funded through Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority by Australian and NSW Governments. NSW DPI is contracted to deliver the Project.

Workshops start Sept 1 and end Oct 1, 2009. Places are limited. Expressions of interest are called from individuals and groups to participate.

For more information or to express interest call 1800 628 422 or email [mrsc@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mrsc@dpi.nsw.gov.au)



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