



Australian young people impacted by family mental illness to receive increased support following significant new funding.

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Kookaburra Kids has received a significant boost as the Bupa Foundation comes on board as Principal Partner and provides \$250,000 of funding for a new flagship nature-based program for young people impacted by family mental illness, Regenerate.

Delivered in cities throughout Australia in 2024, Regenerate is an emotionally and environmentally regenerative program for young people impacted by family mental illness that will see camps, activity days and online connect sessions delivered in 2024 – helping approximately 1,000 young people.

“We know approximately 23% of Australian children are living in families impacted by mental illness”, said CEO of Kookaburra Kids Renee Coffey. “That equates to around 1,000,000 Australian children.”

“Each day, we have families asking us for help – and when we have to turn young people away due to limited funding and program capacity it’s the most heart-breaking part of our work. That’s just one reason I am excited to welcome Bupa Foundation as a Principal Partner and to launch this innovative new nature-based program for young people.

“By being immersed in natural environments and environmental themes; and participating in Kookaburra Kids’ proven mental health literacy activities; young people will learn and have fun alongside their peers, all whilst experiencing the health benefits of being in natural environments” Renee said.

Recent research has shown young people born into families with mental illness are at an increased risk of developing mental health concerns later in life. New research released in 2023 revealed parents who experience depression are more likely than others to have children who develop the condition. In fact, there is a 42% higher risk of depression in children if their father is struggling with depression, and children with a mother battling depression are 3 to 4 times more likely to develop it themselves.”

Bupa Asia Pacific Chief Sustainability and Corporate Affairs Officer Roger Sharp said the new partnership with Kookaburra Kids reinforced Bupa’s commitment to helping young people live happy and healthy lives by interacting with nature.

“This innovative pre-early intervention initiative aims to empower young individuals impacted by family mental illness by providing them with unique opportunities to enhance their mental health, resilience, and environmental awareness” Roger said.

Program Highlights:

- **Positive Physiological and Psychological Effects:** The program seeks to expose young people to the positive physiological and psychological benefits of natural environments, fostering overall well-being.
- **Mental Health Literacy:** Through clinically designed camps, activity days and online Connect sessions, Regenerate will focus on improving young people's mental health literacy and normalising help-seeking behaviours, creating a supportive environment for them to address their mental health concerns.
- **Environmental Volunteering:** Collaboration with local environment groups, and council organisations will allow participants to engage in nature-based experiences, guided bush walks, and environmental activities.
- **Tailored Mental Health Modules:** Developed by expert clinicians, the program will feature tailored mental health and well-being modules to guide participants through the positive effects of natural environments on human health.

Collaboration and Impact

Kookaburra Kids will collaborate with local environmental organisations, ensuring participants receive a holistic experience that combines nature-based activities with mental health education. The program's overarching goal is to empower young people to thrive beyond the impacts of family mental illness and contribute to Australia's future environmental and overall health outcomes.

Quotes

Renée Coffey, CEO of Kookaburra Kids: "We are excited to welcome the Bupa Foundation as a Principal Partner and grateful for their generous support in empowering young people to thrive beyond the impacts of family mental illness. This partnership will not only transform lives but also contribute to positive environmental and health outcomes for Australia."

Roger Sharp, Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, BUPA Foundation: "We are excited to see the launch of the Regenerate program in partnership with Kookaburra Kids. This is the first program of its kind in Australia to combine the known benefits of natural environments with proven mental health literacy and education to the benefit of children impacted by family mental illness."

Regenerate programs scheduled for the first half of 2024:

Camps

23-25 March - ACT

Activity Days

6 April - VIC

1 June - Sydney

Online Connect

21 March - Earth Hour/Harmony Day

3rd April - World Health Day

13 May - Mental Health Awareness Week

5 June - World Environment Day

Eligibility

To participate in Regenerate, a referred young person must have a parent/caregiver or sibling with a mental illness. A full list of programs and to refer a young person visit: www.kookaburrakids.org.au/regenerate.

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About the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation

The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation delivers services to young people (8-18) impacted by family mental illness with the aim of empowering them to build resilience lifelong knowledge and abilities to reach their potential. This is carried out through face-to face programs and online Connect sessions which are run across Australia.

To donate to the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation please go to our website <https://kookaburrakids.org.au/get-involved/donate/>



About the Bupa Foundation

The Bupa Foundation is a health promotion charity dedicated to helping people live healthier, happier lives and making a better world. The Foundation aims to respond to issues that are critical to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people, both now and in the future. The Bupa Foundation delivers programs in two key areas: Healthy minds, building mentally healthy and resilient communities. One Health, addressing the link between planet health and human health.

<https://www.bupa.com.au/about-us/bupa-foundation>



*About the Research and Citations

1. [Australia's Curtin University](#)
2. [National Institute of Health and Care Research](#)