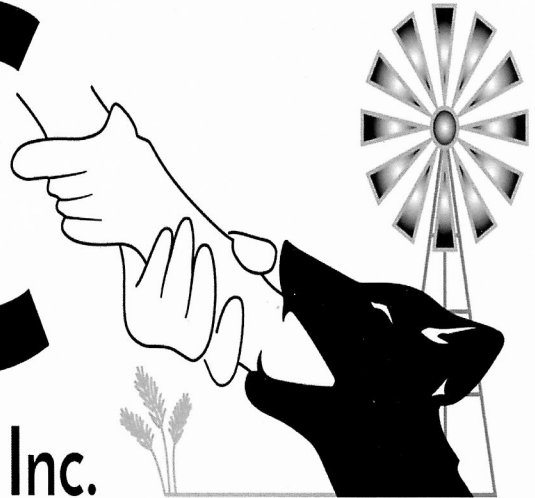


Tabled 10/7/18  
Mr John Harper

# ROC

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc.

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## Rural Outreach Counselling Business Plan 2017



# Rural Outreach Counselling

## Business Plan 2017

Approved by majority vote of the Advisory Committee, November 8, 2017

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### Executive Summary

With the significant reduction in funding streams targeting rural counselling services in recent years it seems Governments can find funds when there is a drought or disaster and withdraw them when the event passes. The problem is, all the issues that are evident during those events are there well before and well after, the drought or disaster event. With this in mind that type of 'on, off' funding model from all levels of Government and Non-Government agencies has taken a toll on the majority of rural and regional families including their communities, none more so than those families experiencing poor mental health and relationship issues. Research provides many reasons why people experience personal and family difficulties however unquestionably the biggest hurdle is the tyranny of distance and isolation that can test the strongest of us. Adversity often strengthens resilience and the opportunity to access appropriate professional services has without a doubt become so cumbersome and time consuming in many rural areas that people have resigned themselves to never have the ability to gain any sense of support or relief.

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. (ROC Inc.) is committed to basically making a change about how rural people gain access to professional counselling and support. ROC Inc. is committed to considerably reduce suicide and the negative impacts of depression, anxiety, stress and trauma in rural families and communities by reaching out proactively with help and support to those individuals displaying poor mental well-being who cannot, or will not present to a GP or existing mental health services.

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. is a not for profit mental health counselling service focussed on supporting sufferers in rural and remote Australia (initially the Riverina). ROC Inc. will be active in rural communities at two levels;

*Level one:* The ROC Inc. Counsellor is an accredited professional and will often be in the first responder role. The ROC Inc. counsellor at all times provides a safe, confidential space for people to talk, this includes being responsive to each person's needs and most importantly within realistic timeframes. ROC Inc. is proud of their record of providing initial contact within 24hrs with follow up phone contact when required and face to face appointments within 2 weeks or a preferred time frame that is appropriate to the client.

*Level two:* At a community level 'Matekeepers' actively flag and support people struggling with personal or mental health issues. MateKeepers will have appropriate first responder training allowing them to feel safe and supported, where ever possible the Matekeeper will identify people or families at risk. The MateKeeper will offer support and encourage the person or family in several ways, 1) assist them to attend a local GP, 2) to contact a ROC Inc. Counsellor, 3) assist them with referral pathways to access appropriate mental



health services locally, 4) continue to monitor and support in a caring empathetic manner and 5) Inform and debrief with a ROC Inc. Counsellor.

The main priority of a Matekeeper will be to get the sufferer to acknowledge they have a problem and so be agreeable to the help and support offered through ROC Inc. and other appropriate professional services. Matekeepers will be trained through programs sourced and provided by Riverina Bluebell or similar body with accredited trainers. These programs and workshops will be open to perspective MateKeepers and the general community so that anybody interested can help prevent or reduce the impact of suicide, depression, anxiety, trauma and stress within their family or community. Present day models have been successfully used in Tasmania and duplicated in Hay NSW highlighting the effectiveness of such an approach.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Business Plan is to:

1. Set a course for the Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. committee and management to successfully manage, operate, and administer the business to become strong and sustainable into the future.
2. Inform funding and financing contributors of capital expenditure to enable the core commitments of ROC Inc., including meeting all legal obligations and requirements while continually developing new funding opportunities and financial partnerships.
3. Provide Rural Outreach Counselling Inc., achievable financial goals in the short and long term and a projected future outlining how the proposed funds will provide Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. the ability to add value to local economies by helping people suffering from poor mental health to actively contribute back into their communities.

## **The Organisation**

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. is a Not for Profit organisation located in the Riverina Region of New South Wales, with the head office based in Wagga Wagga. The organisation was established in 2017 by, John Harper, Patrick Tripodi, David Post, an executive committee including a growing group of Friends of ROC Inc., all of whom have many years of experience personally and professionally in the family relationships and mental health fields. As outlined above ROC Inc. offers two levels of service to rural communities and is developing plans to expand the program across the whole of New South Wales. Beyond providing support and counselling ROC Inc. plans to provide opportunities to develop a sustainable collective of MateKeepers within as many small rural and remote communities as physically possible to ultimately capture individuals and families who display poor mental well-being who can't or won't present to a GP or existing mental health services.

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. also plans on improving the quality of referral pathways as a result of establishing active connections and partnerships with strategic people and community organisations in southern New South Wales by actively involving ROC Inc. at a range of levels within these communities. Furthermore the organisation plans on expanding the MateKeeper and Counselling program to include ongoing training and support avenues with a whole of community approach from the bottom up, as opposed to previously seen programs that focus on a top down approach. Thereby taking into consideration the incredible wealth of local information and intelligence that is contained in these diverse

small communities that have in many cases previously been overlooked. ROC Inc. hopes to fund these programs through corporate, individual and community sponsorships this includes charitable donations.

## **The Market**

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc.'s target market strategy is based on providing support to the group of people who continually slip through the gaps in our rural communities either by way of isolation, distance or simply becoming withdrawn due to poor mental health. The organisation will also rely on the support of local businesses and residents in the community to help with funding and donations so that ROC Inc. can continue building resilience for the future by providing positive outcomes in rural communities. ROC Inc. people and the people that seek the organisation's assistance desire and appreciate quality services, and it is at the forefront of ROC Inc.'s passion to deliver on their expectations.

## **Financial Consideration**

In addition to diligently following this Business Plan to maintain the safeguards for successful business operations and achieve the financial projections herein, the current financial plan of Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. includes obtaining ongoing funding through several methods, one of which is sponsorship to the value of \$6000 per annum committed for three years from local and regional businesses and organisations. Initially, ROC Inc. will actively seek six such sponsors, with the hope of growing this base to 15 sponsors within the first 12 - 18 months of operation. Pledges have been received from numerous corporate businesses stating they are prepared to follow through with their contribution commitment after the granting of charitable status being approved. Other methods of raising funds will be by way of donations of any amount from communities, sporting and service clubs, councils and community focussed mental wellbeing groups. We anticipate building partnerships with a range of other groups from local communities. The idea of crowd funding support and donations from the wider community are continually being explored with positive feedback. ROC Inc. is expecting to secure the pledged funds in the first half of 2018. ROC Inc. will use this funding to;

- 1) Develop the expansion of 'MateKeepers', in rural communities,
- 2) Increase stakeholder partnerships,
- 3) Cover research and development by accessing a Social Work student placement through Charles Sturt University,
- 4) Provide face to face counselling and phone contact services for families and individuals coping with poor mental health in rural communities,
- 5) Continue to cover professional, operational and administrative expenses.

The Organisation's funding forecast is projected to increase during the next three years from \$8400.00 being held in bank funds at the time this plan was written to \$150,000.00 by 2020.

As an incorporated not-for-profit body, Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. is well positioned with significant pledges of \$6000.00 per annum for three years made by our founding sponsors Riverina Bluebell, Mate Helping Mate and Calos Riders Club. Substantial pledges have been committed by Gus Worland's, Gotcha4Life and the Wagga Agricultural College Rugby Club who have also come aboard. Several of these contributions have now been greatly accepted following the granting of Not for Profit, Charitable and Benevolent Status being granted by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and the Australian Taxation Office in January 2018, allowing for greater confidence that all contributions will continue to go directly back into supporting rural people and rural communities.



## Financial summary

The following is a summarised cash position of Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. at 1 November 2017

Total cash amount @ 1.11.17 – Bendigo Bank:	\$ 8280.00
Projected figures for the year ending 30 June 2017:	\$ 20,000.00
Projected figures for the year ending 30 June 2018:	\$ 70,000.00
Projected figures for the year ending 30 June 2019:	\$120,000.00

All projected figures are based on building a strong sustainable base of regional support as a means gaining community funding, rural and corporate sponsorship and including private donations.

## Business Name

Rural Outreach Counselling Incorporated

NSW Registration Number – INC1700827

Date of Incorporation – 19 June 2017

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. – ABN 77 236 992 665

## SWOT Analysis

The strengths for Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. are that it is somewhat unique for the Riverina region that this type of service has the ability to offer a 'ground up approach' and not the 'top down approach' that is traditionally implemented by services funded primarily by government agencies. ROC Inc. takes pride in having the ability to offer high level professional services conducted in a friendly face-to-face manner, allowing the opportunity for questions that may arise, to be answered immediately and referrals to be made promptly. Despite the fact that there is a vast amount of reputable services and agencies offering a broad range of support, it is well recognised that rural areas are still well under resourced.

The weaknesses for ROC Inc. are that there is a vast amount of agencies stating they offer a range of services, even when there are no visible signs in many rural communities. Another weakness may be that Rural Outreach Counselling has a small amount of funds, raising concerns that any growth will require constant monitoring and be managed appropriately from two angles, 1) to reduce financial risk, 2) burnout or care fatigue that may impact 'Matekeepers' and 'Counsellors', with appropriate targeted supervision and emphasising the importance of self-care is expected to minimise this risk. Another weakness is that ROC Inc. in many ways is a new service and to build community trust will take time, money and exposure, all too often services that enter small communities make huge promises that are not lived up to, leaving ROC Inc.'s proposal of three years slightly vulnerable, however the counter affect is extensive years of rural knowledge and experience of the founders and committee members.

## Objectives

Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. has three main objectives:

1. Secure sufficient funding to grow the Organisation to become a best practice model with ability to be duplicated in all rural areas within New South Wales, then with a vision toward the future of becoming National.
2. Service the rural communities of the Riverina with professional support by building a strong resilient base of confident, empathetic and responsive MateKeepers and Counsellors
3. Develop a strong Executive and Advisory of members with wide-ranging experiences who can offer guidance and assistance to raise ongoing funds to allow the organisation meet the vision of reaching out across Australia saving rural lives.

## Mission

The mission of Rural Outreach Counselling is to improve the quality of life in the Riverina area by providing every opportunity possible to reduce the impact of stress, trauma, depression, anxiety and suicide in rural families and communities as well as provide opportunities to support MateKeepers and Counsellors within rural communities.

*Reaching out saving rural lives*

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