



St Patrick's College Old Collegians Podcast

Episode 2 Transcript

Episode recorded and broadcast on 3BA on October 16, 2020 at 10am.

Host: Mr Paul Nolan, Director of Community Development

Interviewer: Mr Brett Macdonald – 3BA

Interviewees: Mr Simon Dwyer (SPC 1976-81), Mr Will Rothe (2020 College Captain), Mr Eric Hayes (St Patrick's College school counsellor), Ms Jenny Johnson (headspace Ballarat).

Producer: Mr Gavin Nash, Mulcahy & Co.

Link:

Paul Nolan

Welcome to the official St Patrick's College podcast as we continue a journey into discovering some of the all-time great stories from one of Ballarat's most famous institutions.

<brief extract from school song – cheers, cheers the green white and blue>

I am Paul Nolan, the director of community development at St Patrick's and I am excited that you are joining me on this school excursion of sorts – as we explore the moments and the men that have contributed so greatly to our rich tradition.

In this second episode we continue a community conversation around the growing issue of mental health – and in particular, youth mental health.

Usually at this time of year the College hosts its annual MENTal Brekky – which generally sells out in record time and raises important money for the Chris Yeung Fund.

That fund, name in honour of an Old Collegian who succumbed to his mental illness in 2015, aims to support current families at St Patrick's College where the father is suffering mental illness.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions we were unable to host an event this year but we were determined to ensure community discussion around issues of mental illness remained active.

So, with the assistance of 3BA, and with the generous financial backing of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Bishop's Charitable Fund, we arranged four interviews to be broadcast on Ballarat radio on Friday, October 16 exploring the topic of youth mental health.

We now throw to Brett Macdonald from 3BA – who expertly lead this discussion.

Brett Macdonald

Well 2020, the year of the pandemic, has been year like no other and we're still not through it yet. The toll it has taken on the mental health of Australians has been immense and we haven't been immune to the impacts here in Ballarat with the demand on local mental health resources surging. The St Patrick's College MENTal Brekky has been a part of the Ballarat events landscape for years

now but, like all gatherings, has had to be cancelled so, as an alternative to the brekky, 3BA and St Pat's have partnered to create a conversation on mental health and, this is it!

A whole hour of radio talking about what is too often not talked about. Joining me this hour will be four special guests that include headspace, College Captain Will Rothe, College counsellor Eric Hayes and, up next, the chairman of the MENTAL Brekky, Simon Dwyer.

And remember if you, or anyone you know needs help, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Promo voiceover: This morning on Ballarat Today – a conversation on mental health for students and parents in a year that's been like no other – Ballarat Today on 3BA.

Brett Macdonald

This is the Friday edition of Ballarat Today on 3BA and we're about to start a conversation about mental health for the next hour. We're doing that because this radio station has partnered with St Pat's College here in Ballarat. While we're not replacing the MENTAL Brekky we're putting an alternative forward for 2020 in a year that has been very, very different.

I've got four guests this hour and my first is the chair of the Chris Yeung Fund. It is Simon Dwyer. Simon, good morning to you.

Simon Dwyer

Good morning Brett, how are you?

Brett Macdonald

I'm well. Nice to have you on the program. Some interesting people to talk to this hour. Let's go back in time. Tell us about the Chris Yeung Fund, how it came to be and what it aims to achieve.



Simon Dwyer (pictured)

In 2015 my best friend, Chris Yeung, completed suicide. Chris had had mental health problems for a long time, but we didn't see a suicide on that radar and he swore black and blue that he would never do it. Too much to live for. But he did and for us at his funeral, at his wake at the Yacht Club, it was a line in the sand moment. It was just one of those big breaths, you know, that you think: why is this happening?

Yeung wasn't the only one. My generation has had a very long and very sad history of losing members of it. I personally have lost at least three members of my extended family to suicide and a second generation member of that as well just last year – as well as countless friends. I read a list of 18 names at last year's brekky and I knew every single one of them.

Brett Macdonald

18 names?

Simon Dwyer

Yep.

Brett Macdonald

It's sobering, isn't it?

Simon Dwyer

It's, it's ... yeah, you would never drink actually.

Brett Macdonald

No, no ... you're exactly right. So, the work continues to this very day through the MENTal Brekky which is normally, Simon, a big event at the school – a big fundraising event as well as getting that message out there. So, we are hoping that this hour on the radio will be, in some way, an alternative to that.

Simon Dwyer

Well, what can you do in a pandemic? You've got to come up with something. So, this was Plan B probably from about March. One of our committee members, John Fogarty, is very experienced in the health sector. He was CEO at St John's for a number of years. John said very early on that he doubted that the brekky would happen. He didn't see anyone being prepared for what we needed to do. He thought events like what we wanted to hold would have to be just postponed so we needed to think about something different. So that's why I am sitting here right now.

Brett Macdonald

Simon, the brekky has had over the years such wonderful supporters and I know you want to put a call out to some of those people this morning.

Simon Dwyer

Well, I did. I wanted to specifically thank the Ballarat Bishop's Charitable Fund through the Diocese, especially Andrew Jirik who has effectively stumped up triple this year than what they would normally do, and that is simply because they knew that we'd be struggling for cash. I also want to thank Tim Hubble for his support for the last three brekkies from VicSuper. They were our big sponsor, our first one but they went through a merger and they couldn't do it anymore. And while I'm at it I'll thank Steve over there at the Regent for his ongoing generosity and putting his hand in his pocket and just doing whatever is needed. Great man.

Brett Macdonald

I totally agree there. The funds that you raise, and it sounds like fundraising has still gone well despite the pandemic, Simon, where does that money go? How does it support the students and their families at St Pat's?

Simon Dwyer

Well we operate under the auspices of the St Pat's Foundation which is an Old Boy Foundation and they hold the money. It's all nice and legal and looked after. We, generally speaking, will fund a boy's education if the father is struggling from mental health. Now it can be diagnosed depression, it can be PTSD, it can be just doing it hard. We're funding about four or five families at the moment – I expected more this year.

Brett Macdonald

Ok. Well that's pleasing.

Simon Dwyer

It is pleasing. It's still a bit troubling too. The money is held by the Foundation and there is a sub-committee with myself and two other members who then decide whether the application from the family is applicable. We've never said no. The school knows how we can help and for these families it is a massive impact. When you take away the stress of education fees then we are really helping mum, because mum has picked up the bundle from dad who is struggling. If that's something that mum doesn't have to worry about then it's really unifying for the family who can then concentrate on the father's health.

My previous background, I created and managed an educational facility for disengaged youth and as I was seeing the people, the kids that were coming through, that was a common denominator – single families, the kids were disengaging from a regular family so I effectively became a father for these kids. So, I just knew that there was something sitting out there that needed to be done and it fitted in really well at the time with the school.

Brett Macdonald

And Simon it goes further than just simply paying the fees as well.

Simon Dwyer

Well it can. You know, we'll pay for counselling, or we'll link dad up with counsellors at the school if need be. We'll pay for camps, books, whatever we can. Sometimes we've actually just met up with the fathers and gone for a walk around the lake, so there's lots of different aspects we can get involved in.

Brett Macdonald

Just the simple things isn't it?

Simon Dwyer

It is.

Brett Macdonald

Well Simon, look it's great that you've pulled this event off the mat in a different format this year and we're still talking about mental health in year which is going to put the strain on so many different corners of society. So, let us keep the conversation going this hour. We've got some interesting guests this hour that you and the team at St Pat's have helped me tee up so we're looking forward to it.

With an eye to the future, Simon, will the MENTal Brekky be returning as we once knew it next year do you think?

Simon Dwyer

Absolutely, and not only in Ballarat, but we've teed up an agreement with St Joseph's in Geelong to hold a MENTal Brekky in Geelong and, whilst I'm at it, we're in discussions with Andrew Jirik from the Ballarat CEO – as the Catholic Education Office – to do something at 11 other schools in western Victoria. So, the MENTal Brekky is heading forward and also we're looking at a Melbourne event as well so we're really branching out into the community which is what we had always planned to do.

Brett Macdonald

Simon Dwyer, chair of the Chris Yeung Fund – thanks for your time.

Simon Dwyer

No worries, that's great. Thanks Brett.

Promo voiceover: This morning on Ballarat Today – a conversation on mental health for students and parents in a year that's been like no other – Ballarat Today on 3BA.

Brett Macdonald

Time to continue our conversation on mental health as we find, well, not a replacement but an alternative to the cancelled MENTal Brekky at St Pat's this year and let's catch up now with the College Captain of St Patrick's College here in Ballarat – Will Rothe. Will, good morning to you.

Will Rothe

G'day Brett, how are you?

Brett Macdonald

Mate, I'm well thank you. More importantly, how are you? Are you ok?

Will Rothe

Yeah, I am going well. It has been a tough year but we're getting through.

Brett Macdonald

It's a great honour Will to be College Captain at St Pat's. If you had your time again, would you choose another year?

Will Rothe

Oh look, not necessarily Brett. I think that it has just been one of those years where we've had to manage and to get through and adopt lots of new ways of learning and connecting with each other.

Brett Macdonald

Let us go back in time Will when the first shutdown happened and the boys from St Pat's were sent home, what did that feel like?

Will Rothe

It was definitely a bit of a surprise, like, I don't think anyone was expecting it but we have, you know, kept the connection between us all and I think that's been a major focus throughout this year, considering we've been at home.

Brett Macdonald

Will how did you manage the screen time juggle, I mean, all of us spend too much time probably on screens these days and all of a sudden everything you did for your learning was screen-based. That must have been really tough.

Will Rothe

Yeah well that's it Brett, that was a big problem. I think the major things was just to have a balance and either exercise or just get outside for a period of time and it went a long way towards getting away from the screen.

Brett Macdonald

Yeah I think going out to have a kick of the footy or something like that meant a whole lot more this year, didn't it.

Will Rothe

Oh, it certainly did. Even just catching up with one mate just for a coffee or anything like that was just great.

Brett Macdonald

Will, of course, since you've made a triumphant return to the classroom at St Pat's, was it good to see the other boys?

Will Rothe

It sure was Brett. A lot of familiar faces back in the College and it was great to be back around each other as we experience these last 12 or so days.

Brett Macdonald

Yeah, I bet it was a great homecoming. Now, tell us about the Chris Yeung Fund as you're pretty close to this Will and you really love the work that it does.

Will Rothe

Yeah, no doubt. It's just amazing the way we've brought it into the College through student wellbeing groups – it's just a major focus on mental health that has been so important for us as a College. We have so much support from counsellors, from student leaders here at the College. I think it's just the most important thing, especially during a year like this.

Brett Macdonald

Speaking to Will Rothe this morning, the St Pat's College Captain – Will have you seen any of your mates gets the wobbles during 2020 because of the challenging year that it has been?

Will Rothe

Yeah, I think so Brett, especially because it is very prevalent, especially this year, and I've definitely noticed a few mates, as you said, getting the wobbles and really facing those problems. I guess the most important thing was just to be there for them to just have a chat and really to just make sure that they're ok and I think that's the most important thing.

Brett Macdonald

One thing I have noticed whilst talking about mental health on this program Will is that blokes, in particular, are really bad at asking for help and talking about their mental health. Do you think that that is finally being broken down?

Will Rothe

Yeah, I think so Brett. I think that the stigma, you know – we're trying to break it. I think, amongst men, it's almost a sign of weakness, we believe – but it's not, it's more than that. Mental health is so important and as we're growing and developing as men we have got to speak up and speak out. There's always help around the corner.

Brett Macdonald

It's not a sign of weakness at all. It's actually, I believe, a sign of strength.

Will Rothe

Yes, exactly. I couldn't agree more with that. You know speaking out and talking to a mate is just so important and it's not a sign of weakness at all. It is actually strength.

Brett Macdonald

Hey Will, I have got an interesting guest on straight after you today, the great Eric Hayes. He works at the College as a counsellor. How important has it been to have people like Hayesy around?

Will Rothe

Oh, he is great, yeah. Hayesy is amazing around the College. Just providing that voice and someone to talk, especially during this year, has been great. So, all counsellors around the school have been amazing.

Brett Macdonald

Now I want an honest answer to this question Will Rothe. How hard have you been studying in the lead-up to VCE exams?

Will Rothe

Yeah look Brett, due to online learning it has been pretty difficult. I guess I am just trying to get as many practice exams in as I possibly can and just making sure I am the best prepared I can be for the upcoming exams.

Brett Macdonald

Are you feeling in a good space?

Will Rothe

Yeah, at the moment Brett, it's a process and I have just got to take it one day as it comes and be as prepared as I can be.

Brett Macdonald

How did you go with the GAT the other day?

Will Rothe

Yeah, it was very long and it was very challenging but, yeah, I got through it.

Brett Macdonald

I admire you young people who do that. I have seen that paper once or twice. It is horrifyingly scary for us old blokes, I tell you what!

Will Rothe

It's horrifyingly scary for us too, don't you worry!

Brett Macdonald

That's good to hear. Well Will, absolute pleasure talking to you mate, and you're a well-deserved College Captain at St Pat's. A big shout out to all the team there this morning. Thanks for talking to us today and let us hope that we might be able to make a triumphant return next year when the MENTal Brekky is back. Goon on you Will.

Will Rothe

No worries at all Brett. Thanks so much for your time.

Promo voiceover: This morning on Ballarat Today – a conversation on mental health for students and parents in a year that's been like no other – Ballarat Today on 3BA.

Brett Macdonald

This is 3BA's Ballarat Today and time to continue our conversation on men's mental health this morning in the absence of the St Patrick's College MENTal Brekky. Well, we have caught up with the chair of the MENTal Brekky Simon Dwyer. We had a chat to Will Rothe, College Captain and time now to have a chat to another fellow who does some really important work at St Pat's here in Ballarat. You might know him as former Miners star and coach and, of course, these days coach of the Rush but, to the boys at St Pat's, he is a much-needed resource as a College counsellor. His name – Eric Hayes. Eric, good morning to you.

Eric Hayes

Good morning, thanks for that.

Brett Macdonald

Nice to have you on the program Eric. It has been a strange year for you, I bet, at the school and no basketball to boot! It has been a weird one.

Eric Hayes

It has certainly been challenging in many ways and the two cross over, you know that missing of sport has been pretty tough on the young people.

Brett Macdonald

Eric, you are no stranger to being a school counsellor, you have been doing in for many years.

Eric Hayes

Yes, I have probably been a counsellor for pretty close to 20 years. Yeah, 19 or 20 years.

Brett Macdonald

Wow! When you were growing up was there such a thing as a school counsellor?

Eric Hayes

Um, no. Well, in the States we had school counsellors but they were more, kind of careers counsellors. But, in terms of being able to go and kind of work with someone – no. It would have been pretty handy.

Brett Macdonald

Absolutely it would have been. Things have changed a lot. In fact, and this is not St Pat's specific, but the demand is so great that there are now three in your team.

Eric Hayes

Yes, we have got three and I think another one is coming on board later this term or early next year. Our area in the school is kind of diversifying a little bit as well but our core aim is just to work with young people and support them during difficult times.

Brett Macdonald

Eric Hayes, can we go back in time to start of the year when this damned pandemic broke out. What happened at the school and how did the boys cope?

Eric Hayes

Yeah, well that was, at the start, I guess it was pretty challenging for all of us – everyone in the community, trying to figure out what it was because, I guess early on, it was kind of just talked about as a flu kind of a thing and people were kind of downplaying it. Then the seriousness of it started coming to the fore and, you know, the school closing down and people having to stay away from each other and whatever. All of that kind of developed and I think for a lot of us – young people and adults – there was that uncertainty about is it safe? And what do we do? Certainly a few youngsters were a little bit anxious as well as us as adults.

Brett Macdonald

We all were. How do you compare shutdown one with shutdown two?

Eric Hayes

Well, shutdown one was really difficult because we didn't know what that meant and how it was going to work and I know for us as a staff, you know teachers – you know how am I going to teach in that form with everything online and not having contact with students. And for us as counsellors, how are we going to support the students when we can't meet with them face to face and have those discussions. So, moving online was different. I guess we had to kind of treat it like a phone call and, I guess, that tele-health kind of idea. So, yeah, it was a big change but I think the first time was around was tough but the second time around was certainly a lot smoother. We had experienced it, we knew what we were doing. And I know from speaking to some of the students, they just said, academically it was so much easier because they felt the teachers knew exactly what they were doing and they were doing things so much smoother. And the boys were able to kind of make some adjustments and feel that little bit more comfortable with being at home and being in and around their X-Box and PS5s and PS4s and whatever and not being on the games all the time and just kind of doing the schoolwork and having a regular school day.

Brett Macdonald

Yeah. I can't imagine how the boys managed the screen times when you have got to use it for learning and then you use it in your downtime as well. It is almost impossible isn't it?

Eric Hayes

Yeah, I think that online learning really created a few extra issues with just being on that screen and getting used to just staying on that screen. And I have talked to a few parents who say that their youngsters are still struggling to get off the screen. They got so hooked into being on the screen and playing games, as well as their schooling, but the gaming – yeah, it is hard to kind of get them off.

Brett Macdonald

I am speaking to St Pat's College counsellor Eric Hayes this morning. Eric, what other unique problems do you believe that you have been confronted with as a counsellor this year?

Eric Hayes

I guess just first and foremost not having people in front of you and I guess, for youngsters, like, not being able to directly interact with their friends, but even to go see family, you know, just to go see their grandparents and having to stay away from older family members just to make sure that they are safe. I guess that idea of just, you know, human contact – being able to give somebody a hug and that's just kind of within family. It has made things fairly awkward and I also think a big impact is sport. So, no matter what sport you play, for a lot of youngsters that was a social outlet as well so there's the sport competition and the physical fitness but just that other aspect of socialising and seeing friends and being with friends. I know it has certainly had a bigger impact on a lot of youngsters.

Brett Macdonald

Yes. Sport ticks so many positive boxes for young people – indeed everyone in society doesn't it Eric?

Eric Hayes

Yes, for sure. I certainly miss the coaching and just the interaction with the young people. You know, obviously, there's the physical fitness side of things but just that interaction and talking to people and seeing people smile and laughing, and being sad, just all the emotions – you just kind of lose some connection with all of that.

Brett Macdonald

Well, look we are glad the boys at St Pat's have made a triumphant return again. There are some announcements coming up this Sunday, we don't want to speculate about what they might look like but we hope we will have some more freedoms in regional Victoria especially. Eric, can you pass on my best to you and your counselling team at St Pat's this year doing a wonderful job in a really, really challenging year. And to the boys as well. They have risen to the occasion I am absolutely sure especially in the year of 2020 and VCE.

Eric Hayes

Yeah, the Year 12s. I guess with the Year 12s some have thrived.

Brett Macdonald

Right!

Eric Hayes

Being at home, just because they're very disciplined, studious young people – so being at home, they had a great opportunity without any distraction to be really focussed on their schooling but others that needed that feedback from teachers, and being able to bounce things off with their peers, they have found it really, really tough. So, yeah, I have talked to a few people who have felt like they have gone and probably had their best year, but others have, you know, kind of fallen off the radar. But even others that were kind of not sure about where they were at with school and were maybe wanting to do apprenticeships and stuff like that, they probably went to those things earlier because they were struggling with school so badly while they were online. So, it has been a little bit of both I think.

Brett Macdonald

Yeah, interesting observations. We are all very, very different beasts. Eric Hayes, we are out of time, thank you for yours.

Eric Hayes

Thank you.

Promo voiceover: This morning on Ballarat Today – a conversation on mental health for students and parents in a year that's been like no other – Ballarat Today on 3BA.

Brett Macdonald

Time to continue our conversation about mental health as an alternative, not a replacement, but an alternative for the St Pat's MENTal Brekky this year. Of course it is Mental Health Week and a big part of that is the headspace organisation. Now we were due to have a chat to their CEO Jason Trethowan today but he has been called away. However, we have an excellent replacement – the local manager of headspace Ballarat Janelle Johnson is on the line. Janelle, good morning.

Janelle Johnson

Good morning. Thanks for having me.

Brett Macdonald

Nice to have you on the program. A little bit about Jason too, he's got the big gig at headspace these days but he's a Ballarat boy?

Janelle Johnson

Yeah, that's right. He's certainly got a really good connection to Ballarat and his connection to St Pat's was, I suppose, what was really important for the Chris Yeung Foundation as well and then coming over to then be CEO for headspace it was just a natural progression.

Brett Macdonald

Janelle, if I was to be in a lift with you and you had to give me your elevator spiel, so to speak, on headspace, what sort of things would you say?

Janelle Johnson

Ah, the elevator spiel. We are an organisation dedicated to young people, 12 to 25, and we provide services that cross the whole gamut, I guess. So, we work with young people on mental health and mental wellbeing, physical health, alcohol and drug support and employment and education. So,

we've got such a range of supporters at headspace. We have got youth lawyers, dieticians, sexual health nurse, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, youth workers, alcohol and drugs, parent workers – we have just got lots of people here really.

Brett Macdonald

Gee, the resources are great. If we go back quite a few years I'd imagine largely none of that would have existed for our young people.

Janelle Johnson

No, look it is really interesting. We speak to a lot of parents and grandparents as well who are caring for young people who constantly say: "Gee, I wish something like this was around when I was younger or when my kids were younger". So, we are really pleased to be part of Ballarat.

Brett Macdonald

And you've been part of the MENTal Brekky for some time now Janelle?

Janelle Johnson

Yeah, we have really been lucky enough to be a part of that MENTal Brekky. It is something that St Pat's has been putting together and inviting us along and a number of other organisations in Ballarat have been supportive of that brekky too. So, I think it is a great opportunity for a lot of the community to get behind it and really celebrate mental health rather than keep the stigma going I guess.

Brett Macdonald

Let's hope we will be back around the breakfast tables in around 12 months' time. That would be really nice Janelle wouldn't it.

Janelle Johnson

I think it would be, yes.

Brett Macdonald

Now, let us go back to the start of this year when the pandemic hit. What did that do to the demand for your services at headspace.

Janelle Johnson

Look, we did find there was a bit of an increase in demand just particularly for young people and parents just to kind of make a bit of sense out of what was happening. Usually when we talk to young people and parents about you know noticing when things aren't right we talk about isolation, not going to school, not going to work, withdrawing from family and friends – and that was enforced on all of us at that stage. So, you know, when you're not doing well you often seek out people and community and it was really hard to do that for a lot of people. We were speaking to lots of people about alternative ways to manage mental health, you know, while in lockdown I guess. And that has just been exacerbated again with the second round of lockdowns. Certainly, this is never an easy time for young people and I am just thinking of all the Year 11s and 12s going through their exams and certainly the tertiary students as well trying to get through and all online really without their natural supports in place.

Brett Macdonald

The word resilience springs to mind doesn't it Janelle. This class of 2020 are going to be a resilient bunch.

Janelle Johnson

Yeah, look, you know, getting through this and doing what they do – this will be one of those things that they tell their grandkids about won't it. Like, oooh, you know, this is nothing like 2020. You know what, I think it is amazing how resilient young people can be and it is amazing how, you know there's the phrase of "It is what it is." You know, actually it is a bit crap, but we can't do anything about it. There are some things that we can't control so we look at those that we can control.

Brett Macdonald

I am speaking to Janelle Johnson this morning – the manager of headspace in Ballarat. Janelle, are young people good at talking about their mental health or do you really have to drag it out of them?

Janelle Johnson

Oh, I suppose it is the same as adults, isn't it? Some people, once given the permission and the safe space, are really comfortable about talking about what's happening to them. So, it is about emotional literacy I suppose. We often give young people words about how to explain physics or to explain a story but we don't give people a lot of words to explain how they are feeling or what they are thinking. The best thing that we can do as a community and as parents and friends is to talk about our mental wellbeing and our mental health and sometimes our mental illness and just to make sure that people have words on how to describe what is going on for them.

Brett Macdonald

Yeah, and I think it is important to remember that it shouldn't be a shameful thing to do, that it is actually a sign of strength if you are prepared to get up and say "Hey, I am not doing alright!"

Janelle Johnson

Yeah, it certainly is. If you can seek your supports when you are not feeling well then that is the best way to feel better quicker I suppose. But it's also about recognising when a mate or when someone else, a partner, is not doing too well and knowing how to approach them and what to do for them as well.

Brett Macdonald

Janelle, how do young people in the Ballarat region reach out to headspace?

Janelle Johnson

They can get online. So, go onto headspace Ballarat on our web page or on our Facebook page. I think we've got Twitter and all that sort of stuff as well. We are just about to open up again and open our doors so people can just wander in and ask for some support. They can also ask their teachers, wellbeing officers, parents, friends to actually make a referral for them as well.

Brett Macdonald

Ok. Lots of ways to get in touch. An approximate date of when you think that your doors may be open again?

Janelle Johnson

You know we never make approximate dates in this particular time.

Brett Macdonald

I think what we say when we don't know is we just say about half past or maybe a quarter to we will be opening. But it will be sometime soon.

Janelle Johnson

Yes it certainly will be. We are really wanting to provide some more support for young people. We find that it is really great to be able to catch someone when they're ready so that's what we want to do. And that is what I suppose what parents, and teachers, and friends, and employers can do as well – catch someone when they think they might need that extra support – when young people are looking for a bit of extra chat time, I suppose.

Brett Macdonald

Yeah, and the one slogan or saying ingrained on my mind these days Janelle is: Are You Ok? It is a pretty simple question to ask.

Janelle Johnson

Yeah, and being willing to listen and just sit down and have a cuppa with someone or a walk and to be there. We don't need to talk about the weather. We can really actually talk and listen about what is actually going on for people at the moment.

Brett Macdonald

Janelle, keep up the great work at headspace Ballarat. It has been a really informative discussion. Thank you so much for your time and we hope to see you back at the MENTAL Brekky in 12 months' time hey?

Janelle Johnson

Yeah, great. Thank you very much for inviting me in.

Brett Macdonald

Janelle Johnson there folks and that is about it for our conversation about mental health this morning during mental health week. An alternative for the MENTAL Brekky. My thanks go to Paul and the team at St Pat's College and also to the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat – the Bishop's Charitable Fund – they are the major annual sponsor of the MENTAL Brekky.

Paul Nolan

We aim to produce two of these each term and will distribute the Green, White and Blue e-newsletter which is emailed to all Old Collegians twice a term. If you're not receiving it and want to sign up for it make sure you get in contact the College and give us your details. We look forward to seeing you again when the next episode airs.