

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Ronan Fairlamb

## Run with Ronan

While most 16yo are hanging out with mates, chatting on their mobiles or engrossed in computer games, Ronan Fairlamb spends every day either at the gym or running alone along country roads.

A former student of Noosa Pengari School in Doonan he was inspired by a project in Yr 8 about adopting a positive mindset to make a difference to others. He now feels ready to take action by running from Brisbane to Melbourne to raise awareness that urgent action is needed to tackle mental health problems faced by people of all ages.

Two years ago Ronan covered 150km in 48 hours including 14km by kayak, 90km by bike and walking the rest. Facing his own mental health struggles and those of friends and family he says society needs a massive change in attitude and resources. He has lost loved ones who found life too hard to continue. "The statistics are staggering. One in five Aussies struggle with mental health issues. These numbers are far too high and we need to make a difference," said Ronan.

Despite being let down by his initial support team and struggling to find a replacement crew Ronan insists he will begin the journey alone on 1 November from New Farm, travelling south via Canberra down the coast and covering 50km a day until he reaches Melbourne.

Despite his lack of a support and sponsors so far Ronan said nothing will stop him even if he does the 1,600km alone. He hopes people

in local communities will run with him as he passes through and donate. Money raised will be shared with mental health organisations including R U OK?

A friend will join him with a vehicle after the first seven days and another bought him his first pair of proper running shoes. He will carry a tent for overnight stays unless accommodation is offered en route. "Doing something like this is hard but I think what people go through on a day-to-day basis is a lot harder than a run."

Ronan's funding comes from his part-time job and donations via the GoFundMe page: [gofundme.com/f/run-with-ronan](https://gofundme.com/f/run-with-ronan). To support, encourage or join Ronan on his journey see the Run with Ronan FB page, TikTok or email: [rfsmedia16@gmail.com](mailto:rfsmedia16@gmail.com). Eileen Walder

## Wellbeing at Eumundi State School



### Equine therapy

Over the last two school terms 14 Eumundi State School (ESS) students participated in an equine therapy program run through Outback Rise – thanks to funding from *Eumundi Voice*.

Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) is a form of experiential therapy that includes horses and a specialist psychologist or counsellor working together with a client to create positive change. EAT may include a number of beneficial equine activities including observing, handling, grooming, groundwork and structured challenging exercises focused on a child's needs and goals.

Through equine therapy students are encouraged to begin to understand their own

unique story. Each student's story is special and they are supported to find their own talents and strengths and gain an understanding of themselves and how they can feel more connected with family and friends.

The horses assist students to read social situations by watching how the horses react and respond to what is happening around them. Students are then able to connect how they react and respond to what is going on. The therapy allows them to focus on positive things about themselves and build self-esteem, resilience and teamwork.



### **Mental Health Week**

During Qld Mental Health Week ESS students were involved in several activities in support of positive mental health.

#### **Clay thumbprint**

Students made a clay thumbprint and discussed how they all have a thumbprint but each of their thumbprints is unique even if they have similarities. All students have talents and gifts which can be built upon. It was wonderful to watch students' faces light up when told that they are unique.

#### **Be kind to your mind**

Students decorated pictures of brains and talked about the things they can do and not do to make their brain happy including meditation, positive relationships, trying something new, healthy food, sleep and having fun.

#### **Yoga**

Students used yoga to move their bodies and it was an opportunity for some to try something new.

#### **Mindful Mondays**

Mindful Mondays are a weekly event at the school and a great way for students to start their week. They learn techniques to help regulate emotions and move their minds and bodies into learning. ESS Chaplain Chappy Sam and a teacher's aide run these mornings where students can reflect on their emotions, how they are feeling and if it's how they want to feel. The class looks at different ways they can change their moods. Meditation, yoga, breath work and creativity/watercolour are used to build positive wellbeing.

