



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Voices for Change**

#### **Who better to share their story than the person who has lived it!**

Voices for Change (VFC) has now completed two programs this year with program two graduates attending their graduation ceremony on Tuesday 11th December 2018.

The highly successful program involves participants with lived experience of health and/or social issues to share their experiences and assist in providing health information to the wider Ballarat community. The aims of the program are to:

- Improve community understanding of key health and social issues and
- To involve VFC participants in contributing to the planning and promotion of relevant services and programs at BCH

“We know that consumer voices can be a powerful tool in advocacy and the delivery of public health and social messages,” Carlene Matthews Voices for Change Project Worker said.

VFC participants become BCH volunteers/ambassadors who commit to the program for 12 months. Over the program, they are provided with extensive training and support to learn effective communication, presentation and self-care skills, as well as learning about a range of health and community programs and services. Each VFC volunteer is matched with a peer support volunteer and a supervisor who manages speaking opportunities and continues to guide and support them in sharing their story with the community.

“Our Program 1 graduates have already been busily involved in speaking opportunities since June 2018 at Mental Health Week in October, Ballarat Community Health Active & Healthy Ageing Expo during Seniors week, Fed Uni and headspace. The program 2 graduates are now competent and confident as they embark on their public speaking roles as coordinated by their BCH supervisors,” Carlene Matthews said.

Participants Tash Fraser and Leanne Stork will be graduating at the ceremony and will share their journey through the program and offer insights for others struggling in similar situations and seeking recovery.

**Voice for Change Graduation Session**  
**Tuesday 11 December 11.30—1.00pm**  
**Ballarat Community Health, 12 Lilburne St, Lucas.**

**Media Enquiries:**  
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Approved by CEO

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