

An added paws of support in the Murrumbidgee

4th April 2018 – Marathon Health is pleased to introduce the newest staff member to the Strong Minds Murrumbidgee service, therapy dog Bear.

Strong Minds Murrumbidgee, funded through the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN), aims to provide timely access to free, short-term mental health services for people in rural and regional Murrumbidgee communities.

Bear, a Border Collie x Labrador, will be working alongside Provisional Psychologist Millie Caspers, once his training is complete.

Therapy animals have been used in psychiatric settings dating back to the eighteenth century¹, with studies showing that they have the ability to reduce stress, anxiety, depression and even the severity of symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

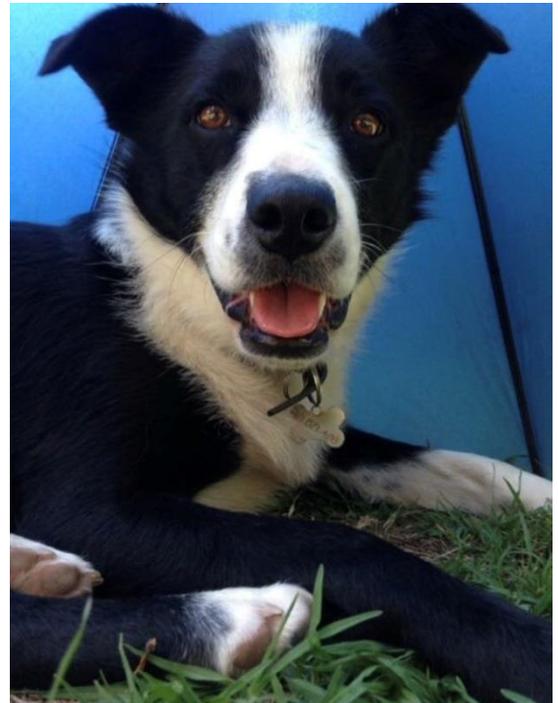
“The use of Bear in clinical settings will be a fantastic additional service for our clients. Therapy Dogs like Bear are specifically trained in the mental health field and offer stability, a sense of calming and just an overall soothing physical presence. On completion of his training, Bear will sit by the client’s side and support them during sessions,” comments Caspers.

Not only will Bear be a great asset to the clients, but also to the Marathon Health staff at the Wagga Wagga office. Dogs within workplaces are becoming increasingly popular with research suggesting that their presence within the workplace can be extremely positive in many areas, including but not limited to, staff morale, stress reduction and increased productivity.

Tracey Parkes, Regional Manager for Murrumbidgee has already noticed a shift in the office atmosphere saying “We certainly receive a lot of attention when we attend events. Bear is already proving to be a pawisitive asset to the team! We hope in the future, therapy dogs will play a larger role in Marathon Health services.”

Strong Minds Murrumbidgee currently provides focused psychological services for children, adolescents, adults, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, individuals from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds, people with financial hardship and people living in rural and remote communities in the Murrumbidgee region.

Strong Minds Murrumbidgee can be accessed via a referral from your local GP. Please note that Strong Minds Murrumbidgee is not a crisis service or a service for those in an acute phase of illness. To get help, call the **AccessLine on 1800 800 944**.



¹ <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01121/full>



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If you have an enquiry about referrals, please call the Murrumbidgee PHN Central Intake Service on 02 6923 3195. Strong Minds is funded by the Murrumbidgee PHN.

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About:

Marathon Health coordinates and delivers the best healthcare in country Australia. For more information about Marathon Health and its services visit www.marathonhealth.com.au

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