

Rally for mental health service

By Serena Seyfort

Calls for greater mental health help for young people in Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges are growing.

Among those joining the chorus for action is a 19-year-old Sunbury student who wants to see a dedicated mental health resource established.

Tori Luke last week started charity Minds Matter, in collaboration with Sunbury Community Health, after a series of tragedies rocked the closeknit Sunbury and Macedon Ranges communities.

"With the recent months that we've had ... I think that now is the best time to push for [a mental health resource]," she said.

"We can't really take no for an answer any more."

Ms Luke is one of many residents who have taken to social media recently, pleading for help for the area's young people.

Minds Matter will next month run a fundraiser for a new mental health resource and to generate further awareness of the issue.

Ms Luke said the event intended to highlight the resources currently available to young people while trying to attain a service that could be more effective.

The fundraiser, Daisy Day, will include stalls from youth and mental health services, such as Sunbury Youth Centre and Goonawarra Neighbourhood House, as well as fun activities, food and drink.

"We're going to have mental health nurses walking around and people to talk to," Ms Luke said.

Hundreds of locals have already registered support for the fundraiser on the event's Facebook page.

This week Ms Luke will meet Sunbury MP Josh Bull to discuss the need for a new local centre.

Currently, the nearest youth mental health help for Sunbury and Macedon Ranges residents is in Sunshine or Ballarat.

"For young people it's just unachievable to get there, especially when you're in a bad state of mind," Ms Luke said.

"We can't really take no for an answer any more"

- Tori Luke

Macedon MP Mary-Anne Thomas said that while there was much to be done in terms of the region's mental health, she urged people to make use of the already available support.

"There are some brilliant organisations and support groups in the Macedon Ranges, and I encourage anyone in need, young or old, to get in touch with their local GP and talk openly about how they're feeling and find out what services are available to them," she said.

Daisy Day will be held at Sunbury's Village Green on Saturday, November 25, from 11am-3pm.

Anyone experiencing mental health problems can call Lifeline 13 11 14, the Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or visit www.eheadspace.org.au