

**MONDAY 6 JUNE, 2022**

## **RACV SUPPORT MEANS MORE PEOPLE CAN ACCESS LIFELINE DURING CHALLENGING TIMES**

RACV has today released a [video](#) outlining how the \$2 million it provided jointly with NRMA Insurance has increased the ways Australians can access Lifeline and receive life changing support through new and boosted services.

In June 2020, RACV and NRMA Insurance granted the funding to Lifeline to:

- Provide more than 8,000 tele-health Counselling sessions for people in communities affected by drought, bushfire, flood and COVID-19.
- Provide *Community Connector* training for up to 3,000 people in communities across Australia, with a focus on those who have regular contact with other community members. The training equipped people with the skills to recognise the signs of mental distress or ill health and the ability to respond effectively and refer people to the most appropriate services.
- Distribute thousands of toolkits and resources within affected regions so that people are aware of the support that is available to them.

These initiatives have complemented the other ways the community can access support from Lifeline including the 13 11 14 phonenumber and its text service.

In addition, RACV gave \$420,000 to extend the operating hours of Lifeline's text service, enabling people to contact the service 24-hours a day for the first time in their 59-year history. This service supports individuals in crisis, giving them the opportunity to access necessary mental health support, whenever and wherever they need to.

Kerrie Marney, a Community Connector from the regional town of Warrnambool in South-West Victoria, said her training has saved the lives of people who have reached out to her for support.

"I wanted to do a course like this to be able to fully support people when they needed help," Ms Marney said.

"Parents have said to me we wouldn't have our daughter if it wasn't for you – and I say I couldn't have done what I did without this course."

Jason Doherty, Regional General Manager Lifeline Geelong & South West Victoria, said the events of the last two years have really impacted Lifeline, with the organisation receiving on average more than 3,000 calls per day.

"In any given day we are supporting people who might be dealing with crisis, loneliness, isolation or even suicide," Mr Doherty said.

“With this support we have been able to expand our services to those who need it most.”

If you, or someone you know are feeling overwhelmed, we encourage you to connect with Lifeline in the way you feel most comfortable. You can phone Lifeline to speak to a Crisis Supporter on 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days), text 0477 131 114 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or chat to Lifeline online at [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) (7pm – midnight, 7 nights).

**-ENDS-**

**Visuals for use:**

- RACV has produced a video explaining the impact of the support from RACV and NRMA Insurance, which can be seen on the RACV YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lu9LJULKDKE>
- The **files are also available as a Video News Release** from RACV Media Team, via the contact details below, and preview via this link <https://youtu.be/g9QSCd0WKG8>

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