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For immediate release

Man's Best Friend making headway at headspace Maitland

In 2017, headspace Maitland greeted a new member to the team – a therapy pup named Melash who is this week turning one.

Over the last few months, Melash has been attracting a lot of attention from the organisation's young clientele. "Every year, a quarter of all young people across Australia will experience mental health issues and we want them to know that headspace is here to help. Melash provides a soft entry point for young people to feel comfortable in our space," Felicity Scott, headspace Maitland Manager, said.

Therapy dogs are being introduced more frequently in care settings, delivering significant benefits toward improving mental health.

"Therapy dogs are known to improve general wellbeing- we've already noticed a change in some of the young people visiting the centre who are excited to be coming in to visit Melash. They're also more open to having a chat about what might be worrying them too, which is a big positive," Ms Scott said.

Melash's entry into the headspace team came after two years of hard work and generous donations from the local community, and notably the donation of Melash from the breeder "Tamaruke".

"We now need to ensure that Melash's ongoing expenses are covered and so we are looking for generous sponsors and new ways the community can pledge their support for the puppy," Ms. Scott said.

Headspace provides a vital community service supporting thousands of young people aged 12 to 25 each year.

"Over the past decade, close to 260,000 young people from all over Australia have had access to mental health care with the provision of more than 1.5 million services in person, online or over the phone at headspace nationally. Your support of our service means that we can keep making a difference in the lives of young people with improved mental wellness," Ms. Scott said.

headspace operates 100 centres nationally. If you are having a tough time, visit your local centre or contact headspace on 1800 650 890 or www.eheadspace.org.au.

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Media Contact: To arrange photo opportunity and/or interview with staff or a young person, contact Samaritans Communication Officer, Laura Dawson on 4960 7149 or 0438 475 772.

Visit headspace.org.au to find a **headspace** centre or access help.