

# WA grief forum in Bunbury a success

Local News

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The South West Compassionate Communities Grief Forum was labelled a huge success by vice chair Leanne O'Shea when 180 people attended on Saturday August 7.

The day long forum, which was live streamed to people from around the world, was about how to develop a compassionate community to support everyone through grief and loss.

Ms O'Shea said there was such varied speakers that no one wanted to leave the room.

"A popular speaker was ABC radio presenter Nadia Mitsopoulos who spoke about her experience of losing her father to suicide, but also put it back into the context of being a journalist," she said.

"She was very raw, real and relatable."

Ms O'Shea's favourite speaker was the City of Albany Mayor, who spoke about how the city implemented being a compassionate community into its city charter.

Three schools from the region participated in the Compassionate Schools Project including Thomas Moore from Margaret River, Manea College from Bunbury and Keanan College from Manjimup.

Ms O'Shea said there was plenty of positive feedback from attendees and many who were on the tv watching the live stream said they were glued to the event.

On the day, Ms O'Shea told the crowd "Professionally and personally, we can all dive further into the deeper understanding of grief, death, compassion and community connectedness.

"A partnership model is important - we are all experts and certainty when it comes to the way we care, die and grieve.

"The non-expert voice always has value - we are better together

"What motivates someone to talk about death is different for everyone but it something we will all experience at some point in our lives.

"It's a vast topic wed rather avoid, don't want think about or deal with until we absolutely have to. For many people this is the case.

"So lets converse in the hard and find the gentle place to land in conversation, compassion and connection.

"Together we create a space for death talk and bring back the act of love and a compassionate community.

"Being part of a community can have a positive effect on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Community involvement provides a sense of belonging and social connectedness.

"It can also offer extra meaning and purpose to everyday life. Lets all build a compassionate and connected WA."

The South West Compassionate Communities Network are looking for volunteers and people can visit its website or Facebook Page for more information.

