

Lesson in compassion

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Participants enjoy a cemetery walk-through as part of last weekend's Dying to Know Day events.

The Bunbury community came together over the weekend to share in compassion for Dying to Know Day 2023.

Aiming to erase the negative stigma surrounding death and dying, South West Compassionate Communities Network held a series of events to bring people together to talk about their options as they approach death in a safe and kind environment. SWCCN project lead Julieanne Hilbers said this year's event would also focus on remembering those who had died.

"The South West Compassionate Communities Network is very actively involved in supporting conversations and engagement in Bunbury, in particular about dying and grieving," she said.

"This year, the focus is very much around people reconnecting with the cemetery, which we know in the old days, so to speak, people used to have a lot more of a connected relationship with cemeteries and we want to try and bring that back."

From a community concert and cemetery tour to a floating lantern festival and death cafe, the SWCCN held a variety of activities for people of all ages, with Ms Hilbers saying this year's participants were encouraged to show compassion in their daily lives.

"People were asked to make a pledge to undertake a compassionate act," she said. "One of the things we found in terms of growing compassion is recognising that we already are such a big-hearted community.

"It's a chance to recognise while there's always room for a little bit more, we can also acknowledge what everyone's already doing, because sometimes that work can be a bit invisible."

Dying to Know Day will be celebrated nationally on Tuesday.