**MEDIA RELEASE**

14 September 2017

**R U OK? Conversation Convoy Rolls in to Rock Cairns for R U OK?Day 2017**

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnball address: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3nd7biyttpqd8v0/RUOKvideo.mov?dl=0>

AFTERtravelling 14,000 km and hosting 30 events across the country, R U OK?’s Conversation Convoy has pulled up at its final destination on the Esplanade in Cairns, in time for R U OK?Day, 14 September.

**For audio grabs and high res images, please visit the Multimedia News Release:**

<http://news.medianet.com.au/liquid-ideas/conversation-convoy-ruokday2017>

The conclusion of the Convoy is marked by a three-hour concert featuring some of the most talented ambassadors – including Ben Lee, Travis Collins, Louise Adams, Steven Oliver, Tullara Connors, Big T, James Van Cooper and former Skunkhour front man and brother of R U OK? founder, Aya Larkin.

The R U OK? Rocks Cairns concert brings artists and performers together to highlight the importance of mateship and connection. Los Angeles based Australian performer Ben Lee said, “I’m a big believer in the power of human beings connecting with each other. It’s a simple remedy to so many of life’s problems.”

The Conversation Convoy hit the road after research indicated that one in three Australians are still uncomfortable asking, ‘Are you ok,’ of those who are struggling with life.

With suicide rates over 2.5 times higher in many regional and remote areas of the country, the Convoy visited communities in the NT, the Kimberley in WA and across the Nullabor to towns as far inland as Bourke, NSW to promote the four steps to having a conversation; **Ask, Listen, Encourage action** and**Check in.**

According to The Centre for Regional and Remote Mental Health, people in major cities are twice as more likely to access a psychologist than their regional and remote counterparts.

CEO Brendan Maher said R U OK? wanted to show all Australians they have a set of resources at hand to check in with anyone they might be worried about.

“We already have assets available to us, those being our eyes, ears and mouths which are sometimes held hostage by fear and stigma,” he said.

“We are trying to create a world where those who are struggling receive the love, care and support they need from the people around them. We all have what it takes to ask someone if they’re ok and if they’re not, that’s where the four steps can help navigate a path to help-seeking.

“We know our 2017 Conversation Convoy has planted seeds in the communities we’ve visited and passed through. We hope it acts as a spring board to asking people if they’re ok 365 days a year, not just on our big day.”

Major sponsor Virgin Mobile will generously be offering free calls and texts all day for family and friends to check in on each other.

**‘R U OK? Rocks Cairns’ on R U OK?Day**

**Where: Fogarty Park Sound Shell, The Esplanade, Cairns.**

**When: 7.30am to 11am**

**ENDS**

For support at any time of day or night, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. For more info, visit [ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au/).

**For interview, image requests or survey results, please contact:**

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**Available for interviews:**

* Brendan Maher, R U OK? CEO
* Katherine Newton, R U OK? Campaign Director
* Rachel Clements, R U OK? Conversation Expert and Clinical Psychologist
* Ben Lee, R U OK? Supporter
* Steve “Commando” Willis, R U OK? Ambassador
* Travis Collins, R U OK? Ambassador and performer
* Louise Adams, R U OK? Ambassador and performer
* Big T, R U OK? Ambassador and performer
* Aya Larkin, R U OK? Board member and former Skunkhour lead singer
* Tullara Connors, R U OK? Ambassador and performer
* James Van Cooper, R U OK? Ambassador and performer

**Notes to Editors:**

**R U OK?**

* R U OK? is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling with life
* R U OK?Day is a national day of action, held on the Thursday 14 September, 2017
* Every day is the day to start a conversation. Conversation tips and crisis numbers can be found at [**ruok.org.au**](http://ruok.org.au/)

*The research was conducted on behalf of R U OK? by Colmar Brunton and via the Colmar Brunton and Your Source Omnibus, which interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,025 Australian adults (aged 18+). It excludes people who’ve participated in the previous three weeks and data is post weighted to ABS proportions. The margin of error associated with the results is +/- 3.0%.*

\*The Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health: <https://www.crrmh.com.au/content/uploads/Briefing-Paper_FINAL_11052017.pdf>

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