

## MEDIA RELEASE



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**Lotterywest awards much-needed grant to the expanding Support Group Sector**  
*Funds will enable ConnectGroups to introduce an innovative peer-led suicide prevention program to WA; and continue supporting over 690 Support Groups across WA.*

**Perth, WA** - On Wednesday 27 January 2021, the peak body for Support Groups in WA, ConnectGroups was pleased to be presented with a cheque to the value of \$564,473 from the Hon. Simone McGurk MLA Minister for Community Services, on behalf of Lotterywest.

This Lotterywest grant will enable ConnectGroups to run two valuable programs:

- Alternatives to Suicide: ConnectGroups will lead the roll out of this innovative, evidence-based peer-to-peer suicide prevention approach from the Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community (WMRLC) in the USA – a first in Australia; and
- Give It Forward grants program: providing small injections of funds to Peer Support Groups to build capacity and sustain their services. These grants are available to ConnectGroups members; there are currently over 690 Support Groups in ConnectGroups' membership. Support Groups do not need to be incorporated to receive ConnectGroups funding.

Antonella Segre, ConnectGroups CEO states, “the Alternatives to Suicide model is an exciting peer-to-peer recovery approach within the space of suicide distress and suicide prevention.”

ConnectGroups provides practical assistance to over 690 Peer Support Groups across WA through training, referrals and information, small grants, advocacy, and sector development. “This Lotterywest grant is incredibly helpful for the Peer Support Group Sector – it demonstrates the Government’s value for the work that Support Groups do in the community,” states CEO Antonella Segre.

Membership to ConnectGroups is free for eligible Peer Support Groups in WA; membership allows groups to access numerous support services, including the Give It Forward grants program. Emerging or established Support Groups wishing to explore ConnectGroups membership can contact the Sector Development Officer, Tegan O’Rafferty [tegan@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:tegan@connectgroups.org.au) or phone 08 9364 6909.

For interview requests, please contact Antonella Segre, Chief Executive Officer on 0400 456 922 or [antonella@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:antonella@connectgroups.org.au).