

Club Grubbery - Raw transcript of interview:

2024-08-30 [Graham speaks with two of the Hoodys volunteers, Suzanne and Kath...](#)

Well, hi everyone, and welcome to a Hoodies Heroes presentation today. I'm Graham Hood and I'm joined by two amazing women and, uh, I'll get them to introduce themselves, starting with Suzanne.

I'm Suzanne. And I'm the New South Wales Coordinator for Hoodies Heroes.

And Kath?

Hi, I'm Kath Turner and I'm the National Hoodies Heroes Coordinator and I look after the Queensland State Group as well.

Right, so, the reason we're doing this interview is we're fortunate enough to be in the same place. Are you guys nervous?

A lot.

My heart's going boom, boom, boom.

Your heart's going boom, boom, boom,

right? I can't believe I'm sitting in this room.

In this room? Yeah. This is where all the action happens, right?

The

little Qantas plane and all that.

All that sort of stuff, yeah. So, we're pretty relaxed because that's the way we need to be. We all need to be relaxed in this world because everyone's too tense. Everyone's a small camping area. Too tense, get it? Anyway. So.

Oh, he's got some witties.

We've had, uh, we've had a great few days together with a group of people and it's been really good.

We have. And, um, it's alright, you can look at me when we're talking, it's fine. We're just having a conversation.

I'm used to looking away.

Just saying, we

haven't been allowed to look. Am I allowed to look

now? Yeah, yeah, yeah, you're allowed to look. Um, but anyhow, we've, we've been. How long Soty Zero has been going?

Oh, four years, I reckon. Yeah, four.

Yep, four years. And we started from humble beginnings. It was an urgent need to get people together because a whole bunch of people were really afraid of what was going on and they were isolated and they were being disconnected from community around vaccine mandates and all that sort of stuff.

And there was a desperate need to bring those people together so they had someone.

Mm hmm.

Because it's kind of like there is a second tier society that was just built overnight, wasn't there?

Yeah, definitely.

And we lost all our privileges and, and, um, and we were looked on like lepers. Mm hmm. It's a pretty good analogy actually, when you think about it.

We were, um, I know for me, I felt like I didn't know anyone. I didn't have my family.

Yeah.

My family had, um, I wasn't allowed to talk about them. certain topics and there was no one to talk to so I felt very alone and very isolated. So to be able to start because we started a Hoodies Heroes group here in um, well in Coffs Harbour.

Um, I was able to find my tribe, someone to, people to talk to, people, like minded people to, to talk to.

And that's huge. And that's been, that's been great because as Michelle and I have been touring. Um, we've been meeting those people. We've visited, I think, every group. Um, and the, the, the happiness and the joy amongst those people in spite of them going through incredible hardship, lost, losing jobs and losing homes and everything.

There's a real connection and there's a new family that's been built. And it's been built out of love and compassion. And that love and compassion shines from you guys because You guys do a lot of moderating on the Hoodies Heroes pages. And you're administering groups and you're dealing with Stuart Robertson.

Which is not easy, I know Stuart. Hi Stuart, he'll

edit it out.

We love you Stuart. Yeah, we

do love you.

We do love you. He'll get a laugh out of that. He's our IT man, back of house man, and he does a beautiful job.

We'd be lost without him actually. We would. Don't tell him that. He's our go to person.

So how many people are in Hoodies Heroes at the moment?

I don't know.

16, 200 on national, plus the state groups. Plus the state groups.

So that's really good. So, and how many local community groups would there be in that?

Around about 50. About 50.

And they're scattered pretty much all over the country.

Mm hmm. There's local community group, Hoodie Zero's local community groups in all states.

Now what I love about them is, look, we did have a lot of teething problems because these things were all thrown together at the last minute because of everything that was happening. But um, the, the joy that we see in people when we go to these gatherings that are in the Hoodies Heroes, and not only Hoodies Heroes, but other people in community that come together because a lot of Hoodies Heroes groups affiliate with other groups as well.

And that's been really rewarding. It's just a whole bunch of really nice people coming together. There are teething problems in every group because when you put people together. But what Michelle and I love about you guys and the Hoodies Heroes moderators is that you do a really good job at sorting a lot of that stuff out as best you can.

And it is a minefield. But the need for it is so great with so many people just perplexed and anxious and depressed. You know, and so, but Hoodies Heroes is not just a way of getting people together in that situation for the sake of activism, is it? Not at all. It's about fellowship and friendship.

Yeah, for sure.

Give us some examples, what sort of things go on at a Hoodies Heroes local community group? Do

you want to go first? Well for us it's often just a catch up to have a chat and see where we're at and how we're feeling, but um, There's other groups, I mean, you know, we do a bit of swapping of herbs and plants and recipes and, you know, um, natural remedies.

But there's groups in, um, around New South Wales, I know for sure, that have speakers come and they do little talks on topics. They have, um, craft groups. Yeah, there's a lot of different activities, isn't there? Yeah, that we aren't always involved in, they're just happening out there.

Kath, how important are coffee catch ups?

Because a lot of people say, oh, all you do is meet for coffee catch ups, but how important is that?

It's extremely important because it's about building relationships within communities. And we've had people come that because of what they've, what they've seen, what they've been, what they've experienced, very similar to us, sometimes it's, it's worse, not putting down anybody's experience, but there's, there may be stuff that's really heavy.

on their heart that they need to share and they can't share it with family and friends. So if there's a coffee catch up, um, they're more than welcome to come along and share what's on their heart. There's no judgment. It's a safe place. No one's going to judge them. And they know that because, you know, we're like minded, we come from the same experiences.

Um, and the same place. So we've had people come and they've just been able to, they might not come along to all the coffee and they don't have to, they don't have to come along to all the catch ups, even if you just want to come along to one to see what it's like, because it takes a lot of courage to be able to go along to a group where you may not know anyone.

You know, that's, that's huge given that they've come from a space of, um, being judged maybe by family, friends, a lot of people lost friends of like 20, 30. So then to come into a group where they may not know

anybody is, is, takes massive courage. So just come along, um, and share what's ever on your heart because, and people go away feeling uplifted.

Yeah, as I said, it just, I feel like when we, when Michelle and I did those five tours around the country, we met the salt of the earth people. I mean, sure, a lot of them had different ideas and they had different agendas. But they all came together for one reason, and that was that they love their country, and they love each other, and they just want to see compassion come back.

They

want to see common sense come back. And they want to know that if there's ever any event in the future, which is looking more likely every day, that there'll be people that they can turn to that they know. And it doesn't cost anything to join. We don't charge membership fees. Um, and we, we have local community group leaders who coordinate events in that particular area.

Some of the towns, I shouldn't mention any names really because I don't want to offend anybody, but Port Lincoln was amazing. You know, Troy and, and, and Phil and Jill down there that, that organized Port Lincoln, they're incredible people. Um, Nirandra was a great group. It was fantastic. You know, we've got Grips all over the place.

Uh, Inverloch. Um, anyway, I could go on. Prosopine. It was just amazing. All around the country. And, uh, to meet those people and know that you could go somewhere and you knew exactly that you would get support and that there were people there with a light mind you could sit down and just breathe with. Just breathe with.

So tell us about the process. If somebody wants to join Hoodies, how do they do that?

They don't need to be a member of the national group. They don't even need to join the state. They can go straight to their local group if, if that suits them. They may already know people who belong to the group. Um, yeah, they just, just visit the group on Facebook, um, or Telegram or Signal, whatever it happens to be, and join and sometimes answer some questions.

Yeah, just three simple questions. And agree to some rules.

Kath, why do we, why do we, um, why do we put the questions on the website for people to join?

Well, I guess there's a few reasons for that. And that's, um, one of them is to see what, you know, where people are at and, um, how they're feeling and what their thoughts are.

The other one is to keep the trolls out.

Yeah. Because

there's this and the scammers, um, and we've had some of that. So it's basically to keep. Um, the Hoodies Heroes, um, page is safe for people to discuss whatever they need to, to discuss. Um, because it's also, We want to provide a safe environment for them as well.

Um, I just wanted to add with the, if you join the national, it's just Hoodies Heroes. If you join the national page and then you want to join one of the state pages, uh, when you join, like when you join the national page, you have to answer the three questions. And that's on Facebook,

isn't it? That's

Hoodies Heroes.

Yeah. Um, then if you want to join a state group, you don't have to answer the three questions because you've already answered them. You'll automatically be accepted into the state group. Um, even if you want to join all the state groups. Cause we've got a travelling hoodies group on Signal.

There's a lot of great nomads out there on the road.

And not so great nomads too. And they can, they can find somewhere so that the beauty of it is you can go to those pages and you can find the local community groups wherever you're going and you can contact one of the organisers and they'll put you in touch. Now what if, what if you've got, you're a member of Hoodies and you want friends to join Hoodies, what's the process as far as Facebook, getting on Facebook's concerned?

Because a lot of people just send emails. An invite, don't they?

We ask people not to use the invite button or send the link. Just go to the, go to the name to Hoodies Heroes or Hoodies Heroes NSW, Hoodies Heroes Victoria and just click join and answer the questions.

And make sure you answer the questions because a lot of people are disappointed.

Um, oh they didn't accept me, mainly because most people don't answer the questions. Is there any other reason why they might be knocked back? I don't know.

If they don't answer within an hour, they're automatically declined. That's right. So if they haven't answered the three questions in that hour, it automatically declines.

And part, the other reason for the questions is to make sure it's not a bot. Yeah.

Yeah, so that's

really important. Because

I've seen, like, I know in some groups, um, it's not moderated. For us, it's on national page. It's it's and the local community groups. That's moderated. We have a look at the answers So if anybody thinks they can just put an asterisk as a as an answer Which I have which I've seen and I get why they do it.

I've probably done it on Because I couldn't think of things Think of what to put. I go, Oh, that, that question is too hard. I'm doing the right thing, you know, so I just want to, um, but yeah, it's all, it's moderated. Like I said, the, if you already on the national page and you want to join the state groups, then you'll automatically be.

Accepted in today. So there's no answering questions about national page. You must answer the questions, please

We're not mining data for any corporation or anything like that It's just to make sure that the pages are safe and the communications are safe and protected So that everyone can feel secure when they uh, when they get involved in hoodies heroes

And the answers are not shared with anybody.

We're the only ones that see them

Right. Okay

Sometimes people do a gone with the wind and I think, please can't post that to the group because no one else is going to see it.

And there's a great, great team of moderators out there, aren't there? They're beautiful.

It's a beautiful, we have an absolutely beautiful senior management team.

We really do. Yeah, yeah. They're all amazing.

Including Stuart?

Definitely. Uh, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Including Stuart. Including

Stuart. And Phillip Ledbetter. Phillip Ledbetter. He's doing great things in Tasmania. He's organising men's groups.

Phil's amazing. We love Phil. Yeah. We love Phil. Absolutely. So proud of what he's doing.

Yeah. And it's wonderful to see him engaging. And yeah.

Yeah. It's beautiful.

And uh, Troy?

Troy, yeah we mentioned Troy and Port Lincoln. I've gone into Port Lincoln because they always take me to the fresh fish place and they fill me up with Big Mouth Nanny Guy, which is quite appropriate for me I guess.

Big Mouth Nanny Guy. Um, anyway.

And Deb, Deb in Victoria.

Deb in Victoria, Deb Frickle. Yep. Amazing, amazing lady, amazing people. There's a whole bunch of them. We shouldn't go mentioning all of them, but Mish, yeah, I know Mish. We've missed her. And

then we've got our moderators, a couple of moderators. Yeah.

Julianne. Megzi.

Megzi. Megan in Tasmania, she's incredible.

Yeah. She's incredible. She's out

in the back box, but she's out there doing the hoodies thing and it's really good.

It is, it's beautiful.

Yeah, it's so wonderful. Um, so before we end the interview, uh, says what were you doing when the pandemic struck?

Fortunately for me, I had left work and semi retired. And, um, took me a bit by surprise because I had no idea what was coming and what it was all about. And, yeah, living on the mid north coast and living the dream, I thought. And then all of a sudden it fell apart. I was reading an old, um, it was a diary note or something I'd made the other day and it was when it all happened and it said that I had said, we were free yesterday and now we're locked down for 50 days and I'd forgotten, I'd forgotten that feeling and it came back to me and, yeah, so anyway, to answer your question, what I was doing was a bit of nothing, just enjoying life.

Mmm.

But you did work for a pretty notorious company. Notorious in terms of, who did you used to work for?

I used to work for Pfizer Australia.

Wow.

Yeah.

What did you do with them?

I was their internet coordinator. So, like a mini version of an internet for a company, for the company. And did that for 10 years and left in 2010 when a lot of the IT jobs were outsourced.

Wow. So yeah, I had been not working for 16, 6 years, 6, 7 years.

They've copped a lot of bad publicity from working there for 10 years without incriminating yourself. Do you think that publicity is deserved?

The good publicity or the bad publicity? Is there any good publicity?

Surprisingly they were an amazing company to work for.

They were a really good company to work for and I sung their praises for a long, long time that I've connected some dots since the last four years and realised I probably saw some things that were leading up to it.

I'm like, you know, I work for an amazing company too. I

was,

uh, and I'm extremely disappointed with the way that they've managed all this and what they're doing now.

I think the brand has been destroyed. And I think, you know, as you say, when we're working for them, they seem like great companies and all of that sort of stuff. But we don't know what goes on a boardroom level as what goes on in the back room. No, that's right. Cathy, you've been on Club Grubbery a couple of times, I think.

Um, and tell us a bit about what you did before you got involved in hoodies.

Before I got involved in hoodies, I'd only just moved to Coffs Harbour for, I'd only been there a couple of years. Geoff and I were planning another overseas trip to New Zealand, which was my, we'd been to Europe and all that sort of thing, but I really wanted to go to New Zealand.

So we were planning to go to New Zealand, and we were that close to going, and then they shut the country down. So, um, I was semi retired, um, so I had my own. online business. I guess it's online or I do it face to face. Um, and it came down to a medical choice. Um, yeah. And, um, so I didn't, I didn't lose a job, but I came very close to losing my family.

And even that was a rough road to navigate for myself. because it really, it was a period where I just felt so very, very alone. It was like I'd been stripped, just stripped of what everything I knew. And, um, it was a crazy time. I felt like I was going crazy. Um, and even, um, I rang, I remember ringing lifeline because I was in that much despair and They couldn't get me off the phone fast enough when they found out about my medical choice because I happened to mention it.

Yep. And then I met up with the lady through hoodies. Um, cause I'd connected with some, um, once, once all that stuff happened and you started hoodies help as I joined, I heard your call out for people to, to join, to help others basically. And I went, yeah, that's me. Cause that's always been me. Um, I did it in my previous job.

Um, With the Queensland Police Service, I was a Peer Support Officer there. Um, before I moved to, as well as working for Police Link, it was sort of a, um, voluntary position. And, um, before I moved to Coffs Harbour. So, um, so I met this lady and she explained to me that, that within Lifeline they were saying that, what are we going to do with the unvaccinated?

Um, that nearly. So when Hoodie put out the call, I went, that's it, I think you must have put out another call, I went, I really need to talk to people. And in being able to talk to others, we saved each other. So, not only did you, and I've spoken to people all across the country, where they say you've saved lives.

And then through the people that joined Hoodies, and we were able to speak to each other, And have someone that finally we could speak to freely without being judged. Um, it was amazing. It saved lives. It did. Literally saved lives.

Well, that's a God thing, isn't it? It is. Because we're all, we're all sort of shooting in the dark, weren't we?

None of us knew exactly, there was no playbook for any of this sort of stuff. I lost it. We'd grown up in the lucky country. Go figure that. We thought,

yeah. It's a shock.

Yeah, it is a shock. And so, um, where do, where do you guys see the solutions? I mean, I don't mean, I'm not talking about political and all that sort of stuff.

How do we rebuild the spirit of our country? You got any ideas? I know this is a question without notice.

That's a big one.

Do you know, I think it's, I, I believe it starts, we've got to start, I think you always say it, Hooty, you know, starting at, at grass root level, you know, so it's starting within our communities and getting together. You know, we just need to join together, get together, have those chats, form friendships.

And I think that's where it that's where it begins and and from little things big things grow

Yeah,

I think we've sort of got to find ourselves again, too

Hmm as people yeah, and find our strength.

We say as a nation. We've lost our compassion

Absolutely,

and we're going to start caring for one another again, which is why you guys are here because you're learning a lot all about the recovery road program that we're doing here at church without walls and it's been a great few days it's been really amazing for everybody including michelle and i um and the solution is that we've got to face it australia has a broken heart it's been divided by experts um it does the government is both persuasions have divided this nation on horrible grounds on horrible grounds and in horrible circumstances and There are a lot of anxious people out there and, you know, this whole misinformation, disinformation stuff that's going on that they're talking about actually happens when governments keep too many secrets.



And

we're over governed and we need, we need to rally together to support one another as we deal with these issues because government has gone too far, clearly. And as a result, people are divided. And, um, we've got to heal this nation that has a broken heart. And, uh, I think that should be our focus because when we're healed we can do amazing things.

Absolutely.

Now that means also, doesn't it, that we've got to embrace people no matter what their medical choices were? I was just going

to say We don't care what medical status you are. We don't. It's not even a thing. You won't even be asked. You won't be asked. It's not a thing. It's not even talked about

that much.

No. Amongst, in the groups anymore. No.

You know, I'm really, I feel discouraged when I see people wearing t shirts with pure blood and things like that written on them. Because to me that's, all we're doing is adding to the division which the government has sowed into the community in the first place. We should be about abolishing all that rubbish and embracing people where they're at.

I totally agree. I feel it just churns me up inside when I see that. Because once again it just causes division. We've already felt that. We don't need to cause more division. We need to just love people where they're at, you know, because everybody's at different levels of understanding this whole thing.

Some people are new to this, you know, and that's a whole, that's a whole learning in like a very short period of time that people will have. And I guess the thing there is there are people who are maybe a little bit afraid to come to, to the groups cause they're not,

they're not sure. Maybe they think they're going to be questioned a bit.

Yeah. It's none of that. It's like family. It's finding a group of friends you didn't know you had and I guess there's a lot of people out there who, um, you know, we said before, three or four years ago, they were separated from their friends and their family and, and they still aren't talking to them sometimes.

So the groups that are still meeting and getting together are sometimes all the family they've got and they look forward to coming and catching up with everyone.

Yeah, reconciliation's a really big thing and we need it. I mean, it's talked about a lot between First Nations people and The rest of, the rest of us in Australia and it's been a big issue in the last couple of years is reconciliation.

But we need reconciliation across the board. We need it amongst people of any different coloured skin and we need to be reconciled where we're at. But we've got to start that, we've got to show the way, we've got to show that we're reconciled with each other. And we've got to, we've got to lead the government in some way by actually saying there is a better way of doing this than just adding more divisions.

Absolutely.

Anyway, Too

true.

Onwards and upwards. So if you want to join Hootie's Heroes social media, Facebook seems to be the main platform, doesn't it? As much as I hate Facebook, and it'll probably be screened on Facebook. Facebook, I dislike you with a vengeance. Um, that's it for me now, we're cancelled.

But, um, at the end of the day, I think we're still afloat, because we are actually doing welfare, and that's what it's all about. We care about our country, we care about its people, it doesn't matter where they come from or what their beliefs are. Or even if they hate us, we've got to come back together because there's a train coming.

There's a train coming. The sooner we recognize that the better. So Facebook, um, Hoodies Heroes, there's a national page, there's color coded state pages, and uh, you know, obviously Queensland's maroon and New South Wales is blue. I don't get that, but anyway. And um, and there's some wonderful, wonderful people.

And I can tell you that This is a huge family, 16, 250 different communities. Oh, what about those Hoodies, those Hawkesbury Woodwinkers?

Yeah, they're pretty, they're pretty special. They're out there, aren't they? They're pretty special.

Oh boy, those old girls. I'm sorry, girls, I'm not criticizing you for your age or anything, but every time we go to a meeting or a town hall, they pop up.

One of them's this big. And she says, Hey, Hoodie, we're here again. And they're part of Hoodie's Heroes family. And they've been there from the beginning. Anyhow, we could go on.

They've got a Hoodies Heroes Hawkesbury now. On Facebook. That's great. They're on Telegram and they've also got Facebook now.

That's great.

So love to all you guys at the Hawkesbury. Anyway, we'd better let this finish with a prayer. What do you think?

Absolutely.

Dear Lord, Father in Heaven, we thank you for the compassion and the love and the sharing that's going on around this country at the moment, Lord, when it's most needed.

So many people are putting themselves last and putting others first. And we thank you for that, Father God. We ask you to bless the Hoodies Heroes Network. And, and Father, we ask you to take it where it needs to go, to bring those people into it who need to be there because it does so much good. And Lord, we just can't wait for the day when we can say this is all done and dusted.

So guide and lead us through that process is our prayer in your precious name, Lord. Amen. Amen. Um, I was going to say something and that is that if it's not about compassion, it's not worth doing.

That's right. And all people will find is love and compassion, a hug if you need it, you'll be welcomed.

There's, there's lots and lots, loads of compassion. So much.

And lots of pumpkin soup. Boil egg sandwiches and cupcakes. Yeah.

No judgment. No judgment. Yeah. No judgment.

No judgment. Mm-Hmm. Anyhow, you guys, you guys are leading lights in the whole thing. You work so hard. If people knew the hours that these ladies put in and all the others we've been mentioning, it's just phenomenal.

It's mind boggling. It's so gratifying. And I think we've come to realize that the only time we look down on anybody else is when we are helping them up. So,

mm-Hmm. , we feel very blessed. We do. Yeah, we are. We're very blessed to be doing this.

And these two ladies, the group's called Hoodies Heroes because these are people I see as heroes.

And um, and we ask you to join the ranks. So give it some thought. If you have any questions, uh, private message or do whatever you need to do, but there's, go to the pages and at least ask the questions and find yourselves in your tribe.

Mm hmm.

So, uh, as Johnny Larder would say, you couldn't make this stuff up.

I wish I'd said that.

I

wish I'd said that.

The other one I'm using a lot lately is, uh, what could possibly go wrong? What could possibly go wrong? Well, everything. Anyhow, stay out of the trees. And don't forget, if you love somebody and you haven't told them, make sure you do. It's vitally important. And what you did yesterday got you to today.

And it's a beautiful day outside where we are, isn't it? It

certainly is, folks. It's been amazing.

We're enjoying it and we encourage you all to do that too. We love you. This is a beautiful country because you're in it, whether you like us or not. So God bless you all and we'll see you next time. Uh, Club Grubbery, Hoodies Heroes, Church Without Walls, whatever platform you're seeing this on, we look forward to sharing with you.

Bye for now. Bye.

Bye.