



**14 October 2019**

## **JOHNATHAN THURSTON TO VISIT QUILPIE TO DELIVER MOTIVATIONAL WORKSHOPS TO LOCALS**

Australian rugby league legend Johnathan Thurston will bring his Johnathan Thurston Academy to Quilpie at the end of October to present a series of workshops to the local community to help inspire and prepare them for the future. He will also attend the official opening of the refurbished Quilpie Football Grounds.

Areas covered by Quilpie Shire Council have been particularly hard hit by the drought crisis. Jonathan's visit to the region is being funded by the Western Queensland PHN under the Empowering Our Communities Initiatives and Quilpie Shire Council. It is hoped the series of workshops will help lift the spirits of locals bringing them together to celebrate as a community.

Thurston will arrive in Quilpie on October 28 where he will host junior rugby league workshops at the footy grounds. The following day Thurston and his team from the Johnathan Thurston Academy will deliver the JTSucceed workshop to local students, which has been designed to encourage youth to stay in school - and attend - until they have finished their education.

The team will then deliver the JTFuture Leaders Workshop to a selected group of 18 to 35-year-olds from the region who hold, or are moving into, leadership positions. It has been developed to help build their confidence and understanding of the importance of their roles in being good role models placing the community firmly at the centre of their decision-making.

Rural Landholders and staff from Quilpie Shire Council will also benefit from a motivational session from Thurston to boost morale.

The three day visit has been made possible thanks to Western Queensland PHN, a not-for-profit organisation formed by South West Hospital and Health Service, Central West Hospital and Health Service and North West Hospital and Health Services and Quilpie Shire Council. The group's charter is to provide a strong foundational platform to improve primary health care services throughout the Western Queensland region which has been badly affected by drought.

Quilpie Shire Council Mayor, Stuart Mackenzie says the visit is sure to boost the spirits of the small outback communities of the shire.

"Rural property owners and local business operators have been particularly hard hit by the impacts of the prolonged drought conditions", Cr Mackenzie said.

“The impacts resonate throughout the entire community including our youth whose families are often struggling financially”, he said.

Thurston, who is the Managing Director of the JT Academy, has spent much of his time since retiring from rugby league promoting programs which encourage and support Australian youth into meaningful employment and education.

“The JT Academy was developed to inspire, support and to set our nation’s youth up to succeed across all areas of their life: employment, education and wellbeing. It’s our absolute pleasure when we get the opportunity to extend our reach to youth living in remote and regional communities,” Thurston explained.

“With the support of our corporate partners and invitations such as this from local councils, we are able to get into some of these communities and deliver programs which make a tangible difference to the lives of local kids and, as a result, the whole community benefits.

“The more we can encourage and support our young people to find a strong sense of self-belief, confidence, courage and purpose, the better prepared they will be to lead future generations. It is a small investment but a worthy one.”

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