

## **Pulse backs Aussie guitar hero's FIFO mental wellbeing initiative**

### **Dai Pritchard, lead guitarist of Rose Tattoo, launches online guitar lesson program to raise morale and reduce stress for remote mining workers**

#### **AUSTRALIA**

Extended lockdowns have affected most Australians in 2021 but few more profoundly than our remote FIFO mining workers, many of whom have been unable to return to their home states routinely. While the government works to reopen borders and restore travel, guitar legend Dai Pritchard, who has qualifications in mental health support, is offering a program of online guitar lessons to provide mining workers with more enjoyable engagement in the meantime.

"Playing music is a hugely rewarding part of my life but I've also had a lifelong interest in human wellbeing. I've spent time in a mining camp donger and it's not much different from the isolation we can feel being in a band on the road a long way from home. People can feel even more lonely in a crowd," Dai said.

Famous to fans of blues-oriented rock music in Australia, Europe, and America where Australia's iconic "Tatts" rock band toured extensively over the years, Dai has been giving guitar lessons and masterclasses online since the advent of video calling. A 2019 television news appearance with Ash Bosworth, managing director and CEO of Newcastle-based mining technology company Pulse, reconnected Dai with the mining industry. From there, once Dai completed qualifications in mental health, he got the idea to pivot his music skills and passionate vocation into a program designed to benefit remote workers during the pandemic and enrich their lives forever beyond.

"My guitar course for remote workers consists of fortnightly one-on-one online tuition sessions with self-paced practice and learning between," Dai said. "It's up to the individual what we explore together. Some people are beginners wanting to learn a few songs they like to sing along with. Others have played guitar previously and want to progress their skills from where they left off. It doesn't matter when you get started or start again because music is a journey and the discoveries are never-ending."

While the series of lessons, working out to \$40 per week, is not currently funded by any scheme or subsidy, Ash Bosworth volunteered for Pulse to pay the first \$80 towards lessons for the first 20 mining workers to join Dai's program. "Pulse is encouraging other companies in the mining industry to support their staff working remotely who want lessons from Dai. It's interesting that a relatively high number of Pulse employees working day-to-day on world-leading software are musicians still playing on the side. As with participation in sporting activities, businesses have much to gain from their people continually developing their coordination, agility, timing, and collaborative skills," Ash Bosworth said.

Not every person working on a remote mining site has a guitar stashed in their donger but it's not necessarily expensive to buy a guitar or even rent one. Dai said, "Beginner acoustic and electric guitars can be cheap to buy online and many music stores offer payment plans and rental deals for anyone who wants to play a better quality instrument without the upfront outlay."

Dai Pritchard, blues/rock guitarist extraordinaire, has led the life that many musicians dream of. From the age of 15, when he became mesmerised by the two guitarists behind the charismatic frontman, Alice Cooper, in concert at Festival Hall in Melbourne, Dai set his sights on becoming a guitarist.

Entering the golden era of Aussie rock as a professional, Dai served his apprenticeship with the likes of Denny and Colin Burgess (The Masters Apprentices) and went on to become the guitarist of choice with big names of the day such as Jimmy Barnes, Glen Shorrock (Little River Band), and Doug Parkinson. Touring and recording for eight years with the great Billy Thorpe consolidated Dai's reputation as a hard-working 'power player'. In 2005, Dai was nominated by the retiring founding member guitarist of Rose Tattoo, Pete Wells, to fill his shoes. For the next 16 years, until COVID-19 struck the live entertainment industry, Dai travelled the globe and hung out with some of the greatest living music legends.

Over the last 10 years, in the background, Dai was spending his time off-the-road teaching budding guitarists to channel their inner rock star either online or with the Weekend Warrior program. Through this interpersonal and community-oriented work, Dai was inspired to return to University studies with the goal of integrating mental health and wellbeing approaches with music as the therapeutic vehicle.

Ash Bosworth of Pulse, a larger-than-life figure in the Australian technology arena, was featured playing air guitar along with Dai's real-time riffs for an NBN news segment. "Ash is an excellent example of someone in the mining industry, a senior executive on the outside, with a musician inside of them, just waiting to break out," Dai said. "With his encouragement, I'm inviting men and women in mining to join me in their downtime from any location. Get in touch with your inner guitar hero, unleash your creativity, and we'll get through these crazy times by jamming together. Music is, after all, the great healer."

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#### BACKGROUND TV SEGMENT:

##### **HUNTER COMPANY JOINS FORCES WITH FAMOUS ROCKER**

by Sam Burbury for NBN News

<https://www.nbnnews.com.au/2019/08/21/hunter-company-joins-forces-with-famous-rocker/>

