GROW

mental wellbeing programs

1954
Father Con Keogh was hospitalised following a mental breakdown

1956
Con and others started to attend Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) groups seeking help for their mental health. After meeting likeminded people within AA, they started to talk about forming a group to meet their own particular needs to help them recover their mental health.

1957
April 26 marks the first official gathering of a group of people at a church hall in Hurstville NSW, to begin helping and supporting each other back to good mental health. This group was known as Recovery

1958
The first version of the 12 Steps were written – known as an 'Amplification of the 12 steps'

1959
The first version of what is now known as the Blue Book was published

1960-1969
By the end of the 60's, there were seven Recovery groups – three in metro Sydney and four in regional NSW

1961
The formation of a central committee of group representatives

1962
Recovery rents its first HQ in Sydney NSW.

By the end of 1962, Recovery groups had grown to 8 metro groups and 10 regional groups

1963
Recovery spread to South Australia sponsored by Bill Salter, a medical superintendent at Hillcrest Hospital in Adelaide. In NSW another mental health professional, Neville Yeomans sponsored a group at North Ryde Hospital. The value of Recovery groups was being noticed by the medical profession. Groups were also started for patients in hospitals moving toward rehabilitation

Recovery launched its first group for former prisoners at Long Bay Gaol in Sydney – this was the first private group

Recovery gained its first benefactor, Sydney businessman Rueben Scarf

By the end o f 1963, there were 24 Recovery groups throughout the country

1964
Recovery has its first international patron W Clement Stone, an American businessman.

By the end of 1964, Recovery had 31 groups across Australia

1965
Recovery spread to New Zealand

1967
Recovery groups now total 120 throughout the country

1969
Shaun O'Hanlan, who had been a missionary in New Guinea suffered a mental breakdown. While recuperating in Victoria, he attended a Recovery group and returned to Ireland well armed with Recovery Literature. He starts the first Recovery group in Ireland.

The first youth group is started in Sydney

1970
Recovery hits 180 groups Australia-wide

1971
Recovery receives its first government funding from the NSW Government

Recovery spreads to Hawaii under the name of GROW

1975
Recovery officially changes its name to GROW

1976
The first residential program was started in Cairns in Northern QLD

1978
The first mainland Groups take place in the USA

1979
Grow's residential drug rehabilitation program starts in NSW

1980-2000
From here on Grow developed and expanded across Australia with Branches being established and funded in each State. The value of Grow was being recognised in supporting community mental health.

Grow National was established at Enmore NSW and for many years nurtured developed and trained Grow leaders and employees from around the country and from overseas.

2000-present
Fr Con Keogh's health was declining leading him to be less involved, stalling the growth of the organisation.

GROW has re-established a National direction, strategy and support that has turned the organisation into the success it is today.

More programs have been added to GROW's portfolio including:
- Get Growing Program for school aged participants
- an online version of our Grow groups known as eGrow
- Young Adults programs
- Prison groups
- Carer's groups

To date, GROW has helped thousands of Australia recover from mental ill-health.