



Tell Gippsland PHN

APRIL - DECEMBER 2024

INTRODUCTION

Gippsland Primary Health Network gathers feedback from community members, advisory groups and health professionals. This is a summary of what we've heard April to December 2024 about what is impacting health and wellbeing, and how we can make improvements.

Challenges for Gippsland



Lack of service access in Gippsland

Key challenges in accessing care include:

- Limited availability of appropriate prescribing and rehabilitation for people experiencing issues with alcohol and other drugs.
- A shortage of allied health services, including podiatry.
- A lack of access to appropriate women's health care and diagnostics.
- Barriers to culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Gaps in support for individuals ineligible for the NDIS or seeking palliative and end-of-life care.
- A shortage of specialist services, particularly in East Gippsland.
- Insufficient urgent care options to reduce reliance on emergency hospital care.

"Gippsland has an ageing population who wants to live and die at home."

- General Practitioner



Significant health workforce shortages

- The Victorian Skills Authority projects that Victoria will need 59,267 new workers by 2026, with 26% of these being required in rural and regional locations.
- Health workforce challenges can affect patient safety and the quality of care people receive.



Many struggle to access mental health support

- Mental health services can be difficult to navigate and have long wait times for appointments.
- There is a shortage of affordable psychiatry and mental health professionals to address complex needs, including trauma-focused care.
- High mental health needs among young people and those with complex challenges remain unmet.
- Lack of access to mental health care contributes to alcohol and drug misuse, as well as worsening physical health.
- Social groups and informal support systems play a valuable role in addressing mental health gaps.

"(We need) access to free psychological services for those who are hard to reach and low income."

- Clinician



Difficulty understanding health information and services

- Health literacy helps people understand when and how to get the care they need.
- There's currently a lack of clear health messaging about how to manage COVID-19.
- It can be hard for people to have conversations about difficult topics like end of life and advance care planning.
- Clear, easy-to-understand health information supports childhood immunisation rates.
- Need to connect healthcare with social care providers.
- The community needs clear, easy to understand messages about available healthcare options.
- People reported they wanted better information about their healthcare options, as well as easy-to-use, centralised digital platforms to view and book appointments.

FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Financial barriers such as healthcare costs and prioritising basic living expenses over health needs.
- Limited access to services in rural and remote areas, compounded by transport challenges and long GP wait times.
- Social and environmental risks, including crime, unsafe living conditions, and isolation among marginalised communities.
- Behavioral and social influences like gambling, and exposure to harmful content, particularly affecting youth.

"To expect people to travel to the [Latrobe] Valley is too much, especially with the cost of living."

- East Gippsland carer

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

- People told us that having access to person-centered care, where they felt heard and understood, was a major contributor to better health outcomes.
- **Urgent Care Clinics** are reducing pressure on emergency departments in Gippsland hospitals.
- Access to support for healthy ageing and early intervention.
- Multidisciplinary models which integrate health and social care, including for older people so they can live at home.

“Telehealth services.... [with] a patient advocate at the other end, helping an older person to maximise the benefit and comprehension of a consultation.”

- General Practitioner

“Care coordination in vulnerable and isolated communities (is especially important).”

- Professional

Gippsland PHN recommendations

- Increased early intervention and support for children exposed to trauma.
- Improved access to support or social groups, especially for young people, older people and carers.
- Telehealth as an option and working with pharmacy, GP and other providers in multidisciplinary care teams.
- Increase community engagement and collaboration to plan healthcare, especially in isolated communities.
- Safe spaces for people with mental health issues, supported by peer workers and volunteers, that people can access outside normal business hours.
- Support for additional medication reviews by pharmacists.
- Support for programs that reduce reoffending.
- Listening to what the community, young people and carers need.

“The best outcomes ... will depend on fostering relationships, communication and trust. ... mutual respect will require professionals and non-professionals working together in a status free environment.”

- General practitioner

Resources and services

- [Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health resources](#) to ask the question and access health checks
- **1800 RESPECT** – 1800 737 732 – support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence
- [Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault \(GCASA\)](#)
- **1 800 My Options** (1800 696 784) for evidence-based information about contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health
- [Gippsland PHN events and training program](#)
- [Head to Health](#) mental health hubs for help, support and access to care, call 1800 595 212
- [Health Access](#) after-hours telehealth service, call 1800 272 767
- [Digital health training for healthcare providers](#), including telehealth and Provider Connect



Crisis services

- [Lifeline](#) - 13 11 14
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) - 1300 659 467
- [Beyond Blue](#) - 1300 224 636
- [MensLine Australia](#) - 1300 789 978
- [Kids Helpline](#) - 1800 551 800
- [ReachOut](#) - Online service for under25s and their parents
- [13YARN - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Support](#) - 13 92 76

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If you have questions or would like to request the detailed document that informed this infographic, please contact tellgippslandphn@gphn.org.au or (03) 5175 5444.