



Tell Gippsland PHN

APRIL - JUNE 2025

INTRODUCTION

Gippsland PHN regularly gathers feedback and insights from community members, advisory groups, and health professionals. This summary reflects the feedback we received from April to June 2025. It highlights key factors affecting health and wellbeing in Gippsland—and opportunities for improvement.

Challenges for Gippsland



Gaps in mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services

- Increased mental health presentations
- Increased problematic alcohol use
- A need for 24/7 person-centred crisis support
- A lack of services for complex presentations
- GPs are managing complex patients due to lack of referral options
- A need for support for hard-to-reach locations, farmers and workers impacted by the energy transition
- Schools need additional counselling support

Referrals... can be a challenge... sometimes because they [referral options] are so busy."

- General practice



Consistently high levels of family violence

- Increases in family violence referrals
- Presenting with trauma, relationship breakdowns and emotional regulation issues
- Youth services seeing increased family violence
- Increase in crisis presentations
- Many referrals for mental health and alcohol and drug services include a domestic violence component

"Looking at family violence risk reduction [referring to support for AOD]."

- Community member



Healthcare system changes lead to uncertainty

- The introduction of MyMedicare and bulk billing changes
- Lack of funding for team care, allied health and nurse practitioners limits ability to reform
- Some system changes have led to an increase in administration requirements
- Changes can be confusing for patients
- Access to digital health tools can be challenging
- Increasing costs of seeing specialists

"...increase in patients requesting doctor to bulk bill their appointments."

- Practice manager



A community under pressure leads to health and wellbeing challenges

- Stigma and judgement in the community related to mental health and AOD
- Homelessness and drug use more visible
- Patients presenting with more tiredness/fatigue
- Children experiencing anxiety, isolation and anger
- An increase in occupational violence and aggression
- Family breakdown

"[Need]...a holistic level of support."

- Community member



An ageing population needs more services and supports

- High proportion of elderly patients in general practices
- Increase in chronic disease, including osteoporosis
- Waiting lists for falls prevention programs
- GP visits to residential aged care homes can be difficult with a high clinic workload
- Workforce shortages in residential aged care, including reliance on temporary migrants
- Upskilling related to palliative care required
- Lack of memory support services

"...consumers don't know how to access aged care, including assessments."

- Healthcare professional



Health workforce challenges continue

- Ongoing issues with recruiting GPs and clinic nurses
- Workforce gaps and mobility affecting continuity of care
- Difficulty finding accommodation impacts recruitment
- Opportunity to grow the Lived/Living Experience Workforce (LLEW)

"...lived experience brings a very unique experience."

- Community member

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

- The **Medicare Mental Health** phone intake service
- **My Health Record** is becoming more useful for clinicians
- **Urgent Care Clinics** provide an important alternative to emergency departments
- **GEGAC** Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisation's approach to holistic care models
- Upskilling nurses in skills such as micro-suturing and immunisation
- **Community Led Integrated Health Care** reaching vulnerable families with great outcomes
- Early intervention programs for **healthy ageing** are helping physical and mental health

...my back has never felt better.

- Community member

Gippsland PHN recommendations

- Integrated mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services with walk-in options and Lived/Living Experience Workforce as first point of contact and support
- Suicide prevention training for clinicians which includes bereavement training
- Reduce stigma related to suicide prevention
- Embed consultation skills, communication skills and trauma informed practice skills in the curriculum for all health professionals
- integration with justice system supports for mental health, AOD & family violence support
- Spaces and support, such as private rooms in libraries or neighborhood houses, where people can privately access digital health
- A funding model that supports shared allied health professionals across different service providers
- Support for more general practitioners to become supervisors for additional capacity to supervise registrars
- Trauma training for front line staff.
- Encourage more **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health checks**, including in mainstream services
- Support programs for mental health and suicide prevention among young people
- Support for clinicians to utilise digital health systems

Resources and services

- **Gippsland Pathways** for health professionals in Gippsland
- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health resources** to ask the question and access health checks
- **1800 RESPECT 1800 737 732 or 0458 737 732** (text available 24/7) support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence
- **1800 My Options 1800 696 784** for evidence-based information about contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health
- **Medicare Mental Health 1800 595 212** a free confidential service to connect you with help and support
- **Mindframe** guidelines for safe media reporting about suicide, mental health concerns and alcohol and other drugs.
- About **MyMedicare** for providers and patients
- **Victorian Virtual Emergency Department** (VVED) a public service for non-life-threatening emergencies
- **Victorian Virtual Specialist Consults** (VVSC) supports primary care providers with the management of complex patients in the community
- **Gippsland PHN events and training program**
- **Digital health training** for healthcare providers including telehealth and Provider Connect
- The **National Lung Cancer Screening Program** is now available
- **Victoria's Take-Home Naloxone Program** provides free access to naloxone, a life-saving medication that reverses opioid overdose



Crisis services

- **Lifeline**
13 11 14 and 0477 13 11 14 (text available 24/7)
- **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**
13 92 76 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Support

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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.