



Tell Gippsland PHN

MAY 2026

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

Workforce and integration pressures within the health care system



System issues impacting health care access and integration

- The health care system can be challenging to navigate for patients with both medical and non-medical needs, such as housing, social and financial needs
- A need for primary care funding models that meet the needs of complex patients
- Access to psychosocial support services remains a concern
- A need for support to ensure equitable access to services such as the NDIS and aged care
- Ambulance Victoria has reported increased lower-acuity patients, linked to less access to bulk billing in general practice
- Fragmented care coordination between the criminal justice system and health care

"People are attending the emergency department for health issues that should be handled in a primary care setting"

- Community member



Health workforce shortages impacting health care access

- Workforce stability challenges are affecting continuity of care
- There is an ongoing need for palliative care training and support for primary care providers
- Access to assessments can be delayed due to workforce shortages
- Complex administrative processes can affect opportunities for upskilling
- Housing availability affects recruitment and access to care
- Access to aged care services varies depending on workforce availability
- Aboriginal Health Worker availability is limited
- Recruitment in rural areas is challenging

"...we need more NPs [Nurse Practitioners] and allied health."

- General practitioner



There are many challenges to achieve connected care for all

- Interoperability between systems remains inconsistent
- Consistent upload of discharge summaries to My Health Record supports continuity of care
- Confidence in digital tools varies among some providers
- System resilience during emergency situations remains an area of concern
- Limited access to digital tools can affect access to services and supports
- Opportunity to integrate allied health providers into connected care models
- Awareness of referral options varies

"[Need] secure forms of communication across the health care sector"

- Community member

Growing health care needs in the community



Growing need for support for people with complex presentations

- Many people have multiple characteristics that put them at higher risk of stigma and discrimination
- Some people do not feel safe accessing health care, including where gender affirming care options are limited
- People experiencing homelessness often have multiple health care needs
- Awareness and support for myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and long COVID vary across services

"We call them complex cases, but often the health care system is contributing to that complexity"

- Professional



Growing health needs among children and young people

- Mental health service wait lists are growing
- Service options for complex presentations are limited
- Family trauma contributes to increased health needs
- Increased disclosures of sexual abuse
- School refusal is increasing
- Eating disorder presentations are becoming more common
- Complex health needs among children involved in out-of-home care
- Parents and carers often prioritise their child's needs over their own wellbeing

"I can't be bothered seeing another GP who doesn't get it [neurodiversity]."

- Young person



Growing mental health needs, including alcohol and other drug problems

- Issues navigating the mental health system
- Providers report increasing complexity in client needs
- An increase in concerns about community safety and loneliness
- Limited access to services and supports for hoarding and squalor
- Increasing presentations to general practice for alcohol and other drug problems
- An increase in mental health referrals with a family violence component
- Limited access to specialist post-natal support services
- Concerns about the impact of the closure of power stations

"Welfare and mental health connections are key to bring together."

- Professional

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

- Automated uploads of discharge summaries to **My Health Record**
- **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
- Nurses in Primary Schools have had a positive impact in Latrobe
- The **Medicare Mental Health** phone intake service
- **Urgent Care Clinics** provide an important alternative to emergency departments
- **Community Led Integrated Health Care** is reaching vulnerable families with great outcomes
- Early intervention programs for **healthy ageing** are helping physical and mental health
- A GP Liaison Officer can help with the transition from hospital to primary care
- Health checks provided in high schools can improve health literacy
- Community supports such as **Orange Sky** providing free laundry and chats

"Many [clinicians] doing good work in isolation"

- Nurse

Gippsland PHN recommendations

- Supporting local health education and training opportunities, starting at high school
- Support for additional Aboriginal Health Workers
- Support for a salaried Nurse Practitioner model for mental health and alcohol and other drugs
- Streamline pathways for upskilling, recruitment and retention
- Provide community support for health care workers and their families, including housing and childcare, to help recruitment and retention
- Make it easier for marginalised communities to access care by building trust, offering no or low-cost options, outreach and walk-in clinics
- Use co-design methods including people with lived or living experience for new models of care
- Ensure all health service providers routinely upload information to My Health Record
- Support person centred-care by providing training on how to have difficult conversations
- Support for providers working with marginalised communities through networks to come together and share experiences
- Build community awareness of death, dying and palliative care
- Use personal stories to improve health messaging, including about childhood immunisation
- Support upskilling of GPs, nurses and allied health providers in mental health, especially for young people

"...the cost of living is making it harder for people to meet their health and wellbeing needs across a range of activities. There needs to be free and discounted... activities for health and wellness."

- Professional

Resources and services

- **1800 RESPECT** - 1800 737 732 or 0458 737 732 (text available 24/7) support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence
- **1800MEDICARE** - 1800 633 422 offers a free, 24/7 helpline where you can speak to a registered nurse about any health concern
- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health resources** to ask the question and access health checks
- **Digital health training for health care providers** including telehealth and Provider Connect
- **Emerge Australia** provides support for people living with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and long COVID
- **Gippsland Pathways** for health professionals in Gippsland
- **Gippsland PHN events and training program**
- **headspace** - 1800 650 890 (support for young people aged 12 to 25 years)
- **Maternal and Child Health Line** - 13 22 29 (for Victorian families with children from birth to 6 years, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **Medicare Mental Health** - 1800 595 212 a free confidential service to connect you with help and support
- **The Raising Children Network** – providing support for parents and carers with evidence-based resources for children and young people from pregnancy through to 18 years
- **Triple P – Positive Parenting Program** support for parents and carers of children up to age 12 to address issues that arise from screens and screen time use



Crisis services

- **13YARN** - 13 92 76 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Support
- **Beyond Blue** - 1300 224 636
- **Lifeline** - 13 11 14 and 0477 13 11 14 (text available 24/7)
- **Kids Helpline** - 1800 551 800
- **MensLine Australia** - 1300 789 978
- **ReachOut** - online service for under 25s and their parents
- **Suicide Call Back Service** - 1300 659 467
- **Suiceline** - 1300 651 251

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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.