



Healing Journey by Alfred Hudson, proud Gunaikurnai man | March 2021

Annual Report

2020-2021

phn
GIPPSLAND

An Australian Government Initiative

Artwork represents a journey of healing

Well known East Gippsland Aboriginal artist, Alfie Hudson, has designed the artwork on the front cover of Gippsland Primary Health Network's 2020-2021 Annual Report.

The blue areas represent water. The Gunaikurnai Aboriginal people view water as healing, together with smoking ceremonies, also seen as healing.

The symbols in the central green area represent children in the centre, followed by women and men then finally community. The dots represent celebration.

The symbol to the left of the painting in the darker area represents a family with one of the family members losing colour because of the darkness being experienced. Alfie believes this represents the challenges of mental health.

The family member embarks on a journey to different places in an effort to find the right path to healing. Eventually he reaches the community and the healing circle.

Alfie added his totem to the painting, a lizard called Bataluk. The lizard is approaching the sun which is the right path to his healing journey.



Alfie explains the elements of his painting in this video.



Alfie Hudson – a painter, dancer and artefact maker

Painter, dancer and artefact maker, Alfred (Alfie) Hudson, lives and works in Bairnsdale Victoria. He is associated with the East Gippsland Aboriginal Arts Corporation.

Alfie was born, raised and lives in Bairnsdale. His people are from the Monaro language group of Far East Gippsland and New South Wales. His mother is Betty Solomon and his father is Laurie Hudson who is a painter and craftsman as are several other family members.

Having learnt about his culture throughout his life, Alfie frequently depicts traditional imagery and themes in a colourful, contemporary and distinctive style. Family and bloodlines are often themes in his painting.

Despite an obviously strong cultural inspiration, Alfie says that he is influenced by the here and now – the way his week has gone and who he has seen.

Alfie enjoys experimenting and learning, and while he generally uses acrylic on canvas, Alfie worked in ground ochre to create a piece titled *Memories* for the Krowathunkoolong Keeping Place Museum to honour the memory of Pop Jock Hood and Uncle Sonny Johnson (known as Jacko). The piece depicts two carved Gunaikurnai shield designs in poles which the Keeping Place is constructed around.

Having completed the Diploma of Visual Art with the Koori Unit at the East Gippsland Institute of TAFE, Alfie considers his greatest achievement to be the encouraging comments he receives from others. He also enjoys gifting his work to family and friends.

In addition to painting, Alfie is also known for his dance and traditional musical ability as well as his artefact making and wood burning. Alfie has recently formed the Footprints Dance Group together with Ivan Hood and Brian O'Connor.

A popular and gregarious yet reserved character, Alfie explains 'My work is a way of communicating without talking'.

Writers: East Gippsland Aboriginal Arts Corporation, VIC



“ Thank you to our
Gippsland primary
care workforce ”



The Aboriginal Shawl Screening Project in 2019 was part of a statewide Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and BreastScreen Victoria Initiative. Delivered in partnership with Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Cooperative and BreastScreen Traralgon, it aims to increase breast screening in Latrobe's Aboriginal community. The project featured artwork of Gunaikurnai woman, Marilyn Fenton.



Watch the video

Contents

2-3	Our cover
6-7	CEO/Chair Message
8-27	Access for Everyone, Everywhere
28-35	Borderless Systems
36-47	Progress Our Priority Issues
48-53	Strong Local Capabilities
54-61	Exceptional Organisation
62	Financials
63	Quick Links



Chief Executive Officer/Chair Message

We are living through extraordinary times and more than ever the collective endeavour by so many to progress better outcomes for our communities is a high priority. Doing it alone is not sustainable; finding common ground, caring and supporting each other for the benefit of the community will always be an essential requirement and is particularly important for us all to find our way back from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team at Gippsland PHN continues in relentless pursuit of achieving our strategic objectives – borderless systems, progress on priority areas of need, improving access to services particularly for those most vulnerable in our community, building strong local capability in primary care health professionals as well as in community and being an exceptional organisation.

Healthcare is a complex system with complex issues at its core. The answer to a better health system is not just reliance on funding; it is in building better, improved ways of working together and optimal use of our current resources and service offerings.

Deliberate, relentless and authentic engagement and partnership will always be essential, and we are delighted to have worked with so many wonderful partners this year. It is an honour to work with others who are anchored in community and person-centred and values-driven care; who are seeking sustainable improvements to our healthcare system and consequently better health outcomes.

This 2020-21 Annual Report is our opportunity to share highlights and learnings over the past year. From our response to COVID-19 through to the many services



Amanda Proposch CEO Gippsland PHN



Therese Tierney **Chair Gippsland PHN**

we have commissioned, there is one constant theme – outcomes important to community, outcomes important to the service provider and most importantly, outcomes important to the individual. The healthcare sector is transitioning towards being more outcomes-focused than ever before. We have commenced this journey from our establishment in 2015 as captured in our vision of a “measurably healthier Gippsland”. There is still much to do to transition to an outcomes approach and we are delighted to share some of the stories so far throughout this report.

Our work this year is made possible by a skilled and committed Board, a remarkable team of staff at Gippsland PHN in collaboration with so many extraordinary partners and service providers.

While it is important to reflect on the wonderful work over the last year, we never lose sight of our goals and what is required to ensure we reach them. May the transition towards outcomes continue and in doing so, show evidence of value of the good work undertaken

“ Deliberate, relentless and authentic engagement and partnership will always be essential, and we are delighted to have worked with so many wonderful partners this year. ”

by the PHN team and by the many partners. We look forward to more stories to come of commissioning out-of-hospital service across Gippsland, partnering to make quality care more accessible, integrated and easier to navigate – especially for people who need it most, as well as helping primary care professionals deliver their absolute best to their community.

Grants enhance the mental and social wellbeing of bushfire affected communities

A total of 24 East Gippsland health and community organisations received \$230,000 in grants for non-clinical initiatives that enhance the mental and social wellbeing of people affected by the 2019/20 bushfires, particularly among vulnerable/priority population groups.

The funds were provided to the successful applicants from the One Good Community Wellbeing Grants Program.

The Australian Government funded Gippsland PHN to deliver initiatives which address the psychological and social impacts of bushfire and disaster affected communities in Gippsland.

This initiative aims to address the needs of bushfire affected communities with a focus on healing, recovery and resilience, particularly among community groups at risk of poor mental health and social wellbeing outcomes.

The grant activities were required to meet the needs of local communities; be led by local communities; build community resilience; foster community connectedness; promote healing and recovery; and deliver mental health and wellbeing benefits.

Gippsland PHN also funded a free bushfire counselling program, delivered in partnership by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV).

Ten free evidence-based counselling sessions are being offered to individuals and/or families who have been impacted by the 2019/20 bushfires in East Gippsland. Services are provided either face-to-face (in Bushfire Recovery Hubs or Quantum Bairnsdale) or via a secure telehealth platform to improve accessibility.



Nowa Nowa welcomes back tourists

The Nowa Nowa community launched a promotional video to attract tourists.

The community was heavily impacted by the 2020 bushfires with several people evacuated for weeks and tourists evacuated, local businesses were hit hard.

In collaboration with Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH) and with funding from the One Good Community Wellbeing Grants, it's hoped the promotional video will attract people to the area's natural beauty.

Bee educated program helps increase pollination

Want to 'Bee educated' in increasing pollination in communities recovering from drought and bushfires?

A Gippsland PHN One Good Community Wellbeing Grant supported the Gippsland Pollination Aid Program run by the Latrobe Valley Bee Keepers Association.

Gippsland Pollination Aid Program

Has drought or fire effected your community?

In conjunction with Gippsland Primary Health Network's One Good Community Wellbeing Grants Program, the LVBA is proud to offer heavily subsidised training to individuals from drought or fire effected communities within Gippsland.

The Gippsland Pollination Aid program is a uniquely designed training course with a focus on personal wellbeing and increasing pollination in recovering communities.

The Gippsland Pollination Aid program includes both theory and practical components, giving you the knowledge and confidence to begin keeping bees. This is a full day course running from 9am until 4pm that includes morning & afternoon tea and lunch.

Courses will be held in **Latrobe City and Wellington Shire**. Accommodation will be provided to qualifying participants.

Final dates: **Saturday MAR 6, and Saturday MAR 27.**

Places are limited. To check eligibility and register your interest please visit <https://lvba.wildapricot.org/events> or contact us via LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com or call 0409 015 237.

An Australian Government initiative



Watch the video

s back to town.

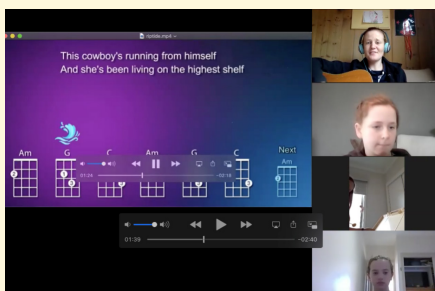
properties destroyed. With the highway closed for several

from the Gippsland PHN One Good Community Wellbeing
rural beauty and plethora of physical activities available.

Music therapy helps emotional wellbeing

With the help of a One Good Community Wellbeing Grant, Adrienne Perry Music Therapy is enhancing the social and emotional wellbeing of the next generation affected by drought in Gippsland.

Adrienne's online music therapy sessions are helping children address the physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs arising from natural disaster by providing opportunities for empowerment, healing and expression.



Men's Shed creates outdoor furniture

Volunteers of the Traralgon Men's Shed constructed items for distribution to two areas affected by the 2019/2020 fires - Clifton Creek and Sarsfield (Bairnsdale area).

The project, funded by a One Good Community Grant from Gippsland PHN, assisted a number of individuals and the community of fire affected areas of East Gippsland, and also provided a meaningful project for members of the Shed.

Bench seats, adult and kids sized picnic tables, cutting boards and other items were transported by Willaton Transport in late February to Clifton Creek, and in mid May to Sarsfield.



A Traralgon Men's Shed member puts the final touches on a piece of outdoor furniture.

Outcomes from One Good Community bushfire funding include:

- Reductions in psychological distress imposed by bushfires/drought and compounded by COVID-19
- Reductions in behaviours secondary to, and exacerbated by, trauma (i.e. alcohol and drug abuse, family conflict, interpersonal dysfunction)
- Reductions in perceptions of isolation, loneliness, and abandonment imposed by the bushfires/drought, which improve self-efficacy in the management of distress
- Relieved financial anxieties imposed by the cost of mental health services (free bushfire counselling)
- Removed financial anxiety associated with the delivery of, for example, community events, parenting support, school programs to manage trauma.

Community catches up over a 'feed'

“People love getting together and having a feed”

Bushfires, quickly followed by COVID-19, saw families and friends in the East Gippsland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community separated for lengthy periods of time, some for more than 12 months.

Now a Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC) initiative, funded by Gippsland Primary Health Network, has brought the community together for a catch-up over a 'feed'.

The Community Feeds have proved such a success that up to 90 people, from children to elders, gather weekly at the GEGAC head office in Bairnsdale to share a meal. Some weeks it is the local pizza van, lasagne, shepherd's pie and corn, on others it's a barbecue.

Even though it's not just about the food, most people eagerly await the upcoming menu, according to two of the Bushfire Support Officers, Alys Sebire and Cathy Brownell.

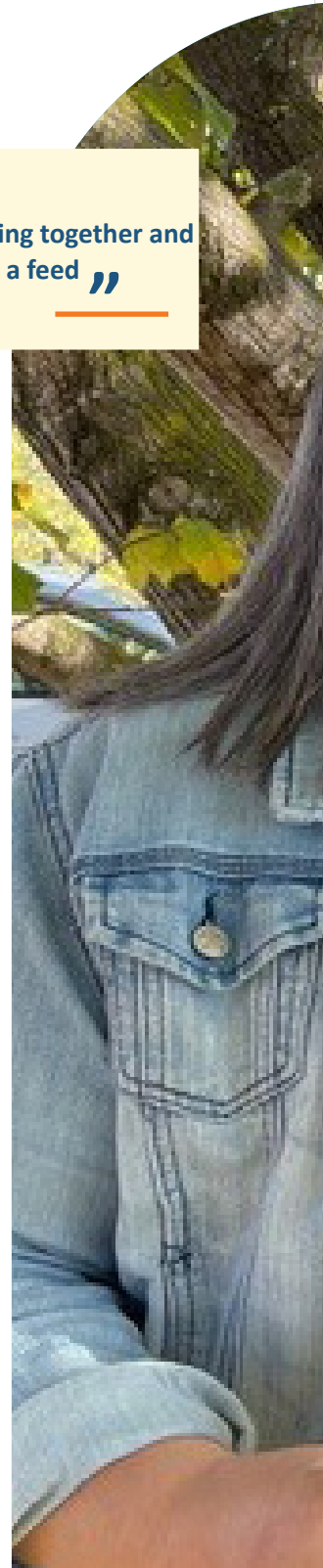
“After the bushfires and COVID, these weekly feeds are now bringing people back together and each week, the numbers have been growing,” Alys said.

“It has been hard seeing people really isolated ... many haven't seen each other for 12 months.”

The \$10,000 grant has been used to purchase food from local businesses. “We also purchased a large esky so we could hold Community Feeds in some of our smaller communities. We had a fishing day at Marlo and did a feed there, as well as a day at the Adventure Park at Lucknow with a barbecue,” Cathy said.

Both women said the Community Feeds were a great way for the community to reconnect with each other and with GEGAC staff. “People engage with our workers and we can identify other ways to provide support if it's needed,” Alys said. “We have developed something consistent that people can rely on and it has helped build trust.”

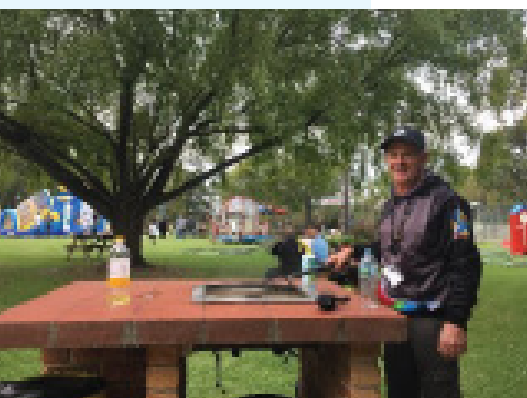
Between 35 and 90 people have been turning up weekly over the last three months. “It has been really successful,” Cathy said. “People love getting together and having a feed.”





“ It has been really successful ”

Alys and Cathy preparing for another Community Feed.



"To see the young ones with Elders... their mentors... was wonderful. We need regular family gatherings so if they (young ones) come unstuck, they have a connection; someone they trust to go to and talk to... COVID broke that."

Mobs walk on Country together thanks to grant

The Orbost Mob and the Cann River Mob hadn't seen each other for well over 12 months.

In fact local Elder, Aunty Susan, couldn't remember the last time they had "walked on Country" together; it was before the coronavirus pandemic and before the 2019-20 bushfires in East Gippsland.

The inaugural Koori Family Gathering Days changed all that. With a \$10,000 One Good Community Grant from the Gippsland Primary Health Network, Moogji organised two days of family fun at the Orbost Snowy Rovers Football Club.

"People hadn't seen each other for so long," Aunty Susan said. "There was lots of reminiscing with the Cann River fellas. There were new babies, babies had grown up and kids were out of high school. It was a reunion for all our community.

"For many it was their first time back on Country for a long time. We are so close to the Cann River Mob and for them to come all this way (for the event) ... they yarned and laughed. The kids went crazy. The teenagers looked after the little ones so their mums could have a break."

The Koori Family Gathering Days were the brainchild of Aunty Susan, an Aboriginal Outreach Worker at Moogji and her colleague, Janelle Day, an Aboriginal Health Practitioner at the centre.

Held on 14 and 15 April, there were jumping castles, face painting, entertainment from

Patches the Clown, Barn Buddies and much more for the kids.

Everyone could enjoy art and craft as well as some pampering with massages, reiki, facials and haircuts. All these activities and more were topped off with an endless supply of food.

"To see the young ones with Elders ... their mentors ... was wonderful. We need regular family gatherings so if they (young ones) come unstuck, they have a connection; someone they trust to go to and talk to ... COVID broke that."

Importantly, out of the Gathering Days has come a local women's group, now meeting weekly at Moogji.

Aunty Susan said Moogji was initially founded more than 30 years ago through a local women's group. "We used to have cooking classes back then," she recalled.

"Now, women are saying to us, 'why can't we do this more often?' so we are. We have been doing wood burning, painting and basket weaving. It's a yarning group and we have lunch. It's not about what we do, it's connecting. Everyone would be happy just sitting on the river bank and fishing ... you can yarn and boil the billy."

Playgroup - the missing link at Neighbourhood Centre

The sound of toddlers laughing and playing at the Paynesville Community Centre may surprise some passers-by who associate the coastal village with boating, fishing and retirees.

Nothing could be further from reality as the community has expanded over the last 30 years and its population profile changed to now include young families with children, many who are newcomers to the area.

The Paynesville Community Centre is the heart of the town with its library, neighbourhood house, childcare centre and adjoining medical centre.

It wasn't until a young mother new to the town reached out through the Neighbourhood Centre's Facebook page, asking if there was a local playgroup where young parents and children could connect, that the Neighbourhood Centre manager, Julia Fitz-Gerald, and Childcare Coordinator, Kathy Broadbent, realised there was a missing link – a local playgroup.

Now, with a \$10,000 grant from Gippsland Primary Health Network's One Good Community program, there is a group of parents and children connecting every

Friday morning and it's growing as word gets around.

"We have a lot of young mums who don't have family or friends around so they are feeling isolated at home with the kids," Kathy said. "Now they are forming friendships which is essential in a new place where it can be very lonely.

"It wouldn't have happened without the playgroup."

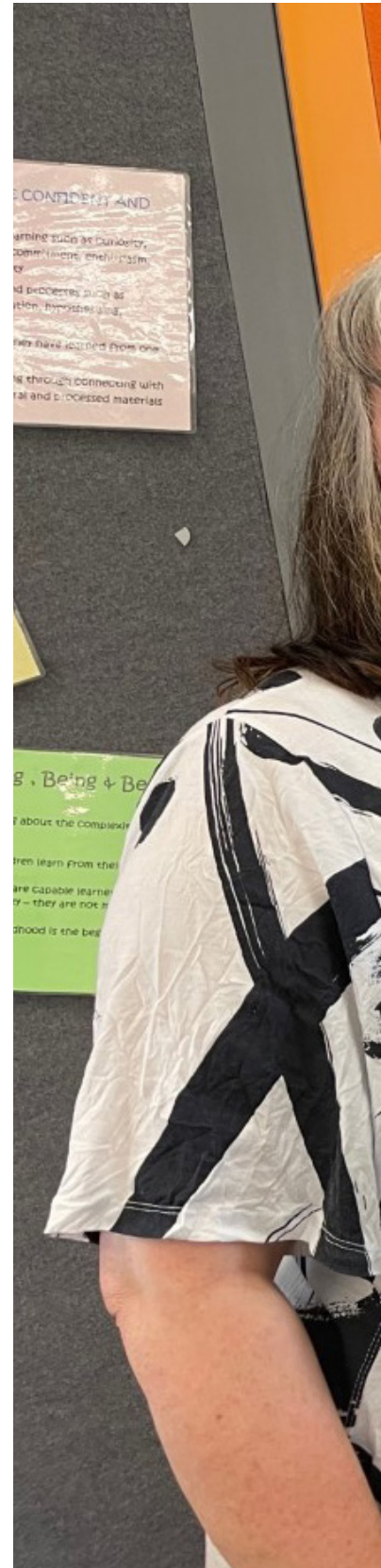
Some special activities were introduced such as yoga, a visit from Whacky Wombat and the '1 2 3 Magic Parenting Program'. After receiving feedback from parents, Kathy organised for a visit from the maternal and child nurse in Bairnsdale and other health organisations.

"It is important to let parents know they're not alone," Kathy said. "If they are feeling overwhelmed, it doesn't mean they are failing. All kids are different and parents need to know they can unload any problems and there is someone to listen."

Julia acknowledged that most importantly, parents had identified what they needed from the playgroup. "This included the '1 2 3' behaviour guide and strategy program which proved valuable."

As Kathy said: "When you see the outcomes and connections developing, it makes it all worthwhile."

"We have a lot of young mums who don't have family or friends around so they are feeling isolated at home with the kids"





“It wouldn’t have happened without the playgroup.”

Grant helps remote community connect

On any day, Sue Carroll could be treating a snake bite, a burn, someone with a broken limb, chest pain, car accident injuries or a severe laceration.

There was the time she was called out to a very remote location at 12am in the freezing cold, when a man was severely injured by a falling tree, another occasion when she was called to the local sawmill after a serious injury and to the local swimming pool to a near drowning.

As the sole nurse manager of the Swifts Creek Bush Nursing Centre for the last nine years and the relief nurse for 15 years prior to that, Sue knows just about every one of the 420 inhabitants of the local community.

She is the first responder for the ambulance service, as there is no 24-hour coverage of an Ambulance Paramedic in the area. She is backed up by amazing Ambulance Community Officers.

"It's not just a nine to five, week-day job," Sue said. "You are on call 24-hours a day in an isolated community like Swifts Creek."

It is this remoteness that prompted Sue to apply and get a \$10,000 One Good Community Grant from Gippsland Primary Health Network.

"We have a number of elderly residents who are isolated because of their age and health," Sue said. "They have been through the terrible bushfires and then COVID-19 lockdowns causing further isolation with very little contact from friends of their age."

Sue used the grant to put on a community lunch each Friday at the centre. Up to 12 people attend every week, tucking into a delicious lunch provided by the local bakery. Those who can't drive are given a lift into town.

"Everyone is having a ball," Sue said. "They are connecting, sharing stories and importantly, laughing. They look forward to it every week and don't want to leave."

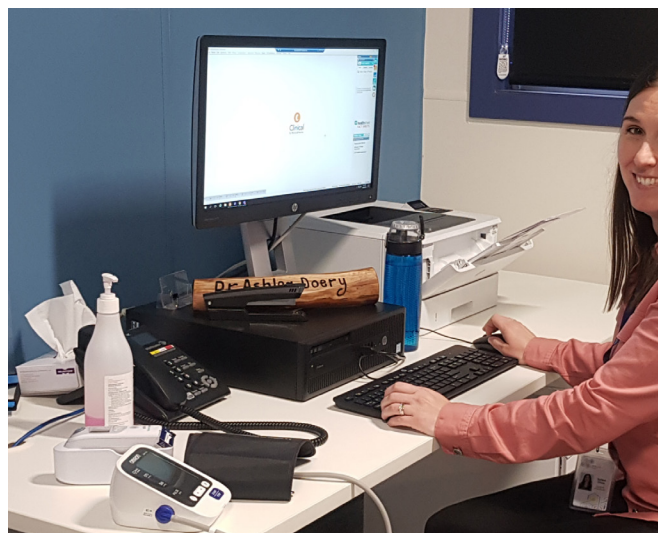
"A weekly lunch might not seem like a big thing for many people but for these residents, it has been a welcome respite. It is about connecting those people in our community who most need it."





Sue Carroll from the Swifts Creek Bush Nursing Centre.

Highest number of referrals were to headspace centres, psychologists, mental health clinicians and school psychologists.



Practice nurses at local secondary schools as part of the Doctors in Secondary Schools program.



General practice goes to secondary schools

Nine secondary schools in Gippsland have access to general practice services in their school as part of an initiative by the Victorian Department of Education and Training in partnership with Gippsland Primary Health Network.

The Doctors in Secondary Schools Program (DiSS) aims to provide better accessibility to primary health care while providing assistance to young people to identify and address any health problems early and reducing the pressure on working parents.

Schools were initially invited to express interest in the program and Gippsland PHN engaged with local general practices to take part, providing access to adequate youth training and resources to facilitate their school visits.

Participating general practitioners provide bulk-billed health services to students up to one day per week, supported by a practice nurse. Students access services at purpose-built clinics on school grounds, either through

appointments or on a walk-in basis. GPs are also engaged in general health promotion activities within the schools.

Gippsland participating schools are:

- Swifts Creek School
- Bairnsdale Secondary College
- Sale Secondary College
- Maffra Secondary College
- Traralgon Secondary College
- Kurnai College
- Warragul Regional College
- Drouin Secondary College
- Neerim District Secondary College

During the COVID-19 restrictions on schools in 2020-21, the Doctors in Secondary Schools turned to telehealth options to provide continuity of service opportunities to students.

From July 2020 – June 2021:

339 students referred to additional service.

headspace Sale supports young people of Wellington

When young people in Wellington Shire experienced challenges in accessing suitable programs to support their health needs, a community-led campaign advocated for the establishment of a headspace service in Sale.

In consultation with the local community, Gippsland PHN established the headspace service to support young people. It is delivered by Relationships Australia Victoria, which is already operating the headspace centre in East Gippsland (Bairnsdale).

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the service initially opened with online services on 15 July 2020, starting face-to-face services in August 2020. Due to coronavirus restrictions, the official opening was delayed and eventually held on 12 March 2021.

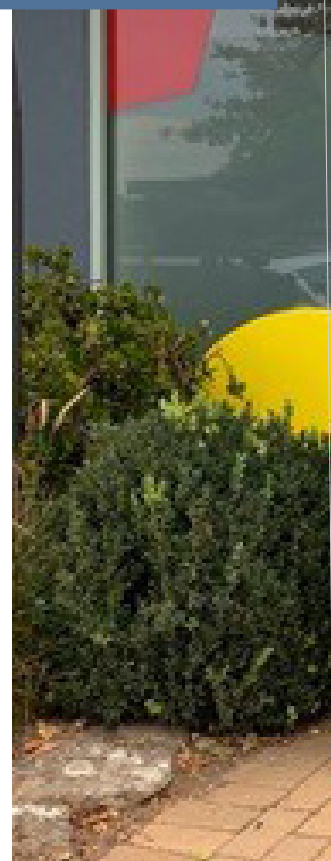
headspace Sale operates as a satellite service attached to the East Gippsland parent centre, providing young people aged 12-25 years with free or low-cost support with any challenges, questions or concerns they have about their mental health, alcohol and other drug issues, physical and sexual health, and relationships.

The service is operated by Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) with a consortium of 11 local service providers. RAV has been providing community mental health support services in Gippsland and across Victoria for many years and is also the lead agency for the existing headspace services in East Gippsland (Bairnsdale) and in Bass Coast/South Gippsland (Wonthaggi).

Young people living in Wellington now have improved mechanisms of support and opportunities to engage with headspace activities through the headspace Sale site.

Relationships between local schools and the headspace Sale site provide a collaborative approach to reaching out with support to young people in the area.

“ headspace Sale operates as a satellite service attached to the East Gippsland parent centre, providing young people aged 12-25 years with free or low-cost support ”





The official opening of the headspace Sale centre on 12 March 2021.



Healing Journey by Alfred Hudson, proud Gunaikurnai man | March 2021



Assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access coordinated care

The Integrated Team Care program and Supplementary Services fund assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Gippsland who are living with chronic illness to access coordinated care and essential medical appointments and aids.

Gippsland Primary Health Network commissioned the four Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across Gippsland to provide the program with the aim of improving healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout the region.

Each service has access to a supplementary fund to assist clients with medical aids, transport and specialist appointments.

Gippsland PHN also holds a Supplementary Services fund for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have a current care plan and do not access the ITC program through one of the funded organisations.

As part of a plan to promote these programs more widely to better service the community, Gippsland PHN commissioned artwork from a local Aboriginal community member to be used on posters and postcards. These have been distributed through general practice and health services across Gippsland.

“ As part of a plan to promote these programs more widely to better service the community, Gippsland PHN commissioned artwork from a local Aboriginal community member to be used on posters and postcards ”

NewAccess for people finding it hard to manage life stressors

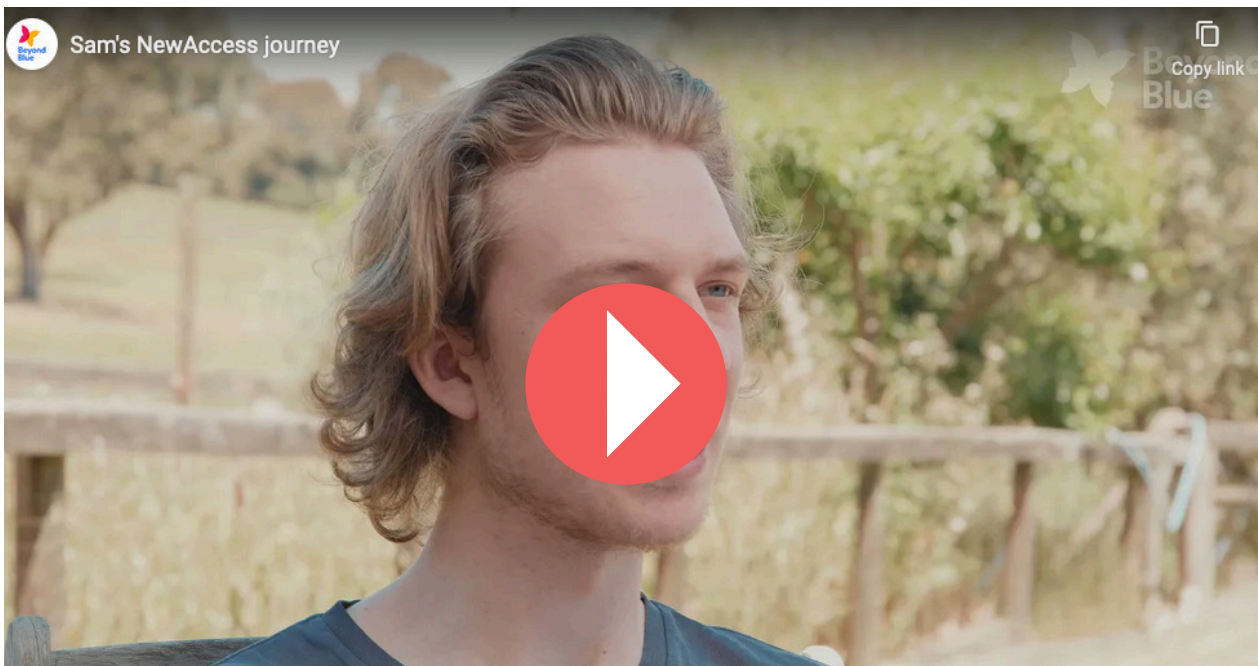
NewAccess is an initiative commissioned by Gippsland Primary Health Network, developed by Beyond Blue and delivered in Gippsland by Wellways to people who are finding it hard to manage life stressors.

The program offers low intensity mental health support for people with mental health issues which is an identified objective within Gippsland PHN.

It provides early intervention to participants, who may have lengthy wait times, to seek psychology support tools and to support Cognitive Behavioral Therapy practices. The participant works with a support coach to set goals and implement strategies to improve their mental health.

No fees are charged for this service and there is the option of engaging with a coach who has lived experience of the participant's mental health issue. Coaches provide support over six sessions through various platforms which include telehealth, phone call or face-to-face. There is no need for a referral or mental health plan.

Accessing this service is for everyone, everywhere, as it supports participants who are unable to travel to attend appointments due to their mental health concerns. This means that someone experiencing anxiety and unable to drive or leave home for support can remain engaged through video call or over the phone.



Watch Sam's video



HeadtoHelp - a response to the coronavirus pandemic

HeadtoHelp is an initiative in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, led by the six Victorian Primary Health Networks (PHNs) including Gippsland PHN.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, 15 mental health hubs were set up across Victoria, two of them in Gippsland.

Gippsland PHN successfully advocated for a 'Hub and Satellite' model to ensure HeadtoHelp services reached beyond the two mental health hub sites by enabling the roll out of satellite sites, which was particularly important in reaching country Victorians.

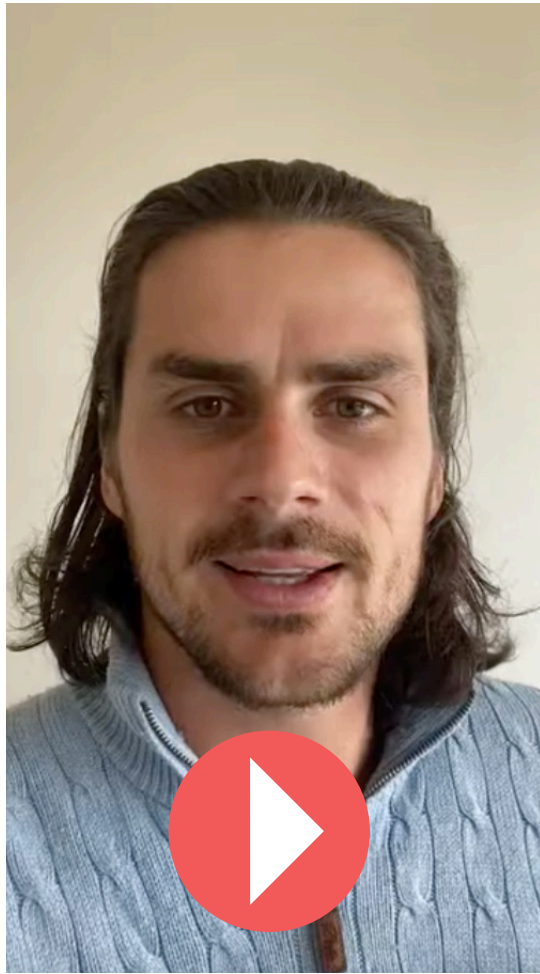
The hubs in Baw Baw Shire (Warragul) and in Wellington Shire (Sale) opened on 14 September 2020. Initially the hubs had a foundation workforce, with both hubs rapidly scaling up to full capacity. Early in 2021, four satellite locations opened in Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Traralgon and Leongatha.

In recognition of workforce challenges in rural and regional areas, the evidence-based design of the HeadtoHelp model ensures best use of current, existing multidisciplinary workforce teams while also attracting a new workforce into Gippsland. The services are designed to complement and raise awareness of existing services in each location.

The HeadtoHelp initiative includes a state-wide phone line (1800 595 212) undertaking best practice initial assessment, intake and referral to ensure services offered match the needs of the individuals. The intake process provides a 'no wrong door' approach.



Watch HeadtoHelp video



Watch Tom's video



The service operates in an integrated way within the HeadtoHelp model of care, offering multidisciplinary teams of mental health workers, including psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers, alcohol and drug workers, and peer support workers to provide extra support during the pandemic.

Staff also work closely with existing providers including general practitioners and hospitals, referring people to more intensive mental health care or social supports when needed.

Measuring its success

Across Victoria, from 14 September 2020 (date of service commencement) to 30 June 2021:

10,698 people called or made an enquiry to HeadtoHelp

5,750 people were referred to an appropriate service: 88% to HeadtoHelp hubs, 12% to other services

5,074 people received services like counselling or psychology from HeadtoHelp hubs

Around **80%** of consumers who have completed their care with a HeadtoHelp hub have shown a significant improvement in their mental health.

Consumer experience of HeadtoHelp intake:

77% comfortable using service

80% felt listened to

74% said information supported needs

76% liked their overall experience



Digital Health Toolbox is a one-stop-shop for healthcare professionals

Gippsland PHN One Good Community (OGC) Digital Health Toolbox seeks to drive positive change in health behaviours through quality improvement and improved access, adoption and use of digital health tools and technologies across the healthcare sector.

The OGC Digital Health Toolbox consolidates all of the digital health tools, technologies and resources to drive improvements in the delivery of healthcare to Gippslanders.

Healthcare services and professionals will use a range of digital health tools and technologies, and invite community, carers and family (circles of care) to care for people living with chronic, complex and mental illness to shift models of care beyond fee for service to impact health outcomes.

Digital health tools and technologies can improve quality through measures such as monitoring chronic conditions more effectively to avoid acute events, increase adherence to best practices, increase early detection and screening of disease, improve clinical decisions, and promote healthier behaviors.

The OGC Digital Health Toolbox is a one-stop-shop for healthcare professionals for all of their digital health tool needs, technologies and resources to improve quality, accessibility, transparency, efficiency and patient outcomes.

Healthcare providers now have access to and adopt digital health tools and technologies as well as the capacity to use digital health tools to improve patient care.



POLAR GP is a cloud-based clinical intelligence platform for general practitioners, practice managers and other staff to use within their practice to support internal operations, patient-centred care, quality improvement and business development.



A total of 77 general practices in Gippsland (94%) have an active POLAR agreement with Gippsland PHN.

“A new care coordinator was appointed and trained in POLAR and she currently uses POLAR to identify patients with chronic health conditions for recalls, care planning and blood tests, etc. This has made it much easier for the care coordinator to send reminders and monitor patients.”

A Gippsland general practice

Quality Improvement Practice Incentives Program (PIP)

Quality Improvement PIP supports general practice activities that encourage continuing improvements, quality care, enhancing capacity and improving access and health outcomes for patients.

Participating practices are supported to use the information they have about their own communities

and knowledge of their patient's needs to develop innovative strategies to drive improvement.

There are 63 general practices (up 8.62% from the 2019-20 financial year) participating in PIP QI across Gippsland.



My Health Record

Accessed via a MyGov account, My Health Record allows general practices to securely store and share information about patients' health with other healthcare professionals, carers or family members.

A total of 177 Gippsland healthcare provider organisations are registered to My Health Record, a percentage increase of 9.25% from last financial year, with 69 general practices (up 4.54% from the previous year) and 76 retail pharmacies (up 11.76%) registered to the system.

In the 2020-2021 financial year, Gippsland healthcare providers interacted with 1,783,450 (up 21.27%) clinical documents in the My Health Record system. Of these 1,733,542 (up 26.03%) clinical documents were uploaded to My Health Record comprising 10,604 Shared Health Summaries, 1,009 Event Summaries, 2,596 Discharge Summaries, 784,417 Prescription Records and 914,441 Dispense Records and other clinical documents.

There have been 49,908 (up 17.88%) clinical document views in My Health Record Gippsland-wide comprising

1,117 Shared Health Summaries, 235 Event Summaries, 888 Discharge Summaries, 10,473 Medication views and 1,696 Immunisations views. Additionally, Gippsland providers have also assisted 45 patients with registering to the My Health Record.

There has been a 13.93% increase in Shared Health Summary uploads by Gippsland providers and a 54.98% increase in Discharge Summary uploads by Gippsland hospitals.

Gippsland PHN engaged with 247 Private Specialists (National Health Services Directory data) in Gippsland on the My Health Record and other Commonwealth supported Digital Health initiatives.

Two workshops were facilitated by Community-Owned Primary Health Enterprise (COPHE) in Gippsland to promote adoption of My Health Record. COPHE is an expert and experienced team working to grow community influence in primary health care, especially by owning and running services to meet the needs of their community.

"The COVID-19 vaccine rollout has resulted in greater exposure to My Health Record as general practitioners are required to review immunisation history for patients."

A Gippsland general practice

40



In Gippsland, 40 general practices have adopted e-prescribing.

“General practices have reported a positive uptake by both patients and general practitioners of e-prescribing”

Project Coordinator Digital Health Quality Improvement

e-prescribing

Instead of receiving a paper prescription, e-prescribing allows a general practitioner to send what is called a token to a patient’s mobile phone or email. This is taken to a pharmacy where the token is scanned and medicine dispensed.

Gippsland PHN has supported interested general practices and retail pharmacies to adopt and implement e-prescribing by providing a range of information and resources such as:

- How to register for electronic prescribing including system requirements;
- Fact sheets and training resources; and,
- How to support their patients with electronic prescribing information.

Secure messaging

Secure messaging enables the safe, secure, interoperable and confidential information sharing across all healthcare providers and consumers.

Currently, there is a lack of a consistent approach to information exchange across the Australian health sector where it is not possible to send secure messaging from one product to another.

Gippsland PHN has provided support to general practices to increase the knowledge of secure messaging and usage of this digital tool.

“The set-up of the secure messaging system has meant that the time taken for administration staff to allocate correspondence is reduced and is now more secure as it is automatic, rather than being open to human error!”

A Gippsland general practice.



DIGITAL HEALTH GUIDE

The Digital Health Guide is an online resource doctors can use to look up more than 700 digital health apps and prescribe the best one for their patients.

Apps cover topics such as mental health, nutrition, fitness, family planning, smoking cessation and more.

Gippsland PHN is offering the Digital Health Guide subscription to all general practice staff, allied health

professionals and pharmacists across Gippsland. In the 2020-2021 financial year, 92 users requested access to the Digital Health Guide, contributing to a remarkable number of 648 Gippsland users registered to the Digital Health Guide (up 18.03%). The users include 150 medical practitioners, 166 nurses, 131 allied health professionals, 20 pharmacists and 181 identifying as non-clinical users.

13,209 pageviews
3,820 active user sessions (interactions within Gippsland HealthPathways)
 where local health professionals are accessing Gippsland HealthPathways
65.9% new health professionals accessing Gippsland HealthPathways
34.1% returning health professionals accessing Gippsland HealthPathways
 In 2020-2021, **111** new pathways were developed bringing the total number of
 pathways to **483**.

HealthPathways Gippsland

HealthPathways Gippsland is an online portal, designed to be used by health professionals at the point of care.

Each pathway provides clear and concise guidance for the assessment and management of patients with a symptom or condition. Referral information is included in the pathways reflecting the local referral pathways that assist in connecting patients to the right care, in the right place at the right time, and with the right healthcare provider.

Each pathway is evidence-informed, reflecting local reality, and aims to preserve clinical autonomy and patient choice.

Five local suites of pathways were developed addressing local priorities:

- Eating disorders
- Dementia
- Mental health referral
- Thunderstorm asthma

A consultation working group was held with five clinical council members to further enhance the development and functionality of the mental health referral suite of pathways.

Two clinical working groups were held with local health professionals participating. Stakeholders engaged to support the HealthPathways program included:

- General practitioners
- Specialists (Subject Matter Experts)
- Midwives
- Dental services

- Allied health professionals
- Mental health professionals
- Nurse practitioners

A total of eight Subject Matter Experts were engaged to contribute to the development of clinical pathways and suites developed.

The HealthPathways methodology has enabled stronger collaboration with stakeholders. As a part of being involved in HealthPathways projects, six key stakeholders have increased their engagement from information sharing to collaborating on system improvement activities.

Top 10 HealthPathway views in 2020-2021

- 1 **Non-urgent or Routine Mental Health Referrals**
- 2 **Certification of Death**
- 3 **Anxiety and Depression in Adults**
- 4 **Diarrhoea in Adults**
- 5 **Immunisation – Adults**
- 6 **Sudden or Recent Vision Loss**
- 7 **COVID-19 Aged Residential Care Assessment**
- 8 **COVID-19 Initial Assessment and Management**
- 9 **COVID-19 Practice Management**
- 10 **Suspected Melanoma**



The Capacity Tracker is a cloud-based, online tool to support general practices, Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) during emergencies.

One RACF and 36 general practices in Gippsland have to date, signed up to the capacity tracker and are uploading information.

Details uploaded are:

- Staff numbers
- Vacant beds (RACF)
- PPE supply (good/urgent)
- COVID-19 cases
- Staff capacity
- COVID testing capacity
- Appointment capacity
- Which RACF they are linked to

This enables Gippsland PHN to identify any service capacity issues, shortfall in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supply and COVID-19 cases across Gippsland.

Remote Patient Monitoring

Remote patient monitoring enables patients with chronic disease conditions to be cared for in their own homes.

Using the digital platform, Lifeguard, patients report regularly via a smart device on vital signs and symptoms which is transferred to a central location (health service) in real time, assisting their health care team to identify early signs of deterioration enabling early intervention.

Monitoring templates for the top 20 chronic diseases in Gippsland have been developed by a clinical reference group, outlining the clinical thresholds for vital signs and symptoms. If a patient reports outside of the clinical threshold, the health care team will be alerted and clinical action can be taken.

The model of care developed for remote patient monitoring has been implemented across a range of projects in Gippsland.

“By regularly monitoring their symptoms, our participants have found that they are more aware of the early signs, and with the education from their nurse consultant, have adapted their behaviour in response to these symptoms rather than ignoring them, minimising the escalation of their condition and keeping them feeling stronger, healthier and more confident in managing their condition”

Value-Based Healthcare project team

DigitalCare@Home

DigitalCare@Home is a collaborative project between Gippsland PHN and the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

The project focuses on improving the health outcomes of patients living with chronic disease in far East Gippsland by enabling access to care coordination and timely decision making within or close to their home.

Value-Based Health Care at Central Gippsland Health

Gippsland PHN is working closely with the Central Gippsland Health Value-Based Health Care project team to implement remote patient monitoring as a key component of the project. The Value-Based Health Care project aims to deliver improved health outcomes to patients and the community, in a financially sustainable manner.

Train IT eLearning

A series of Train IT Medical eLearning courses, hosted on a unique online Learning Management System (LMS), is available through Gippsland PHN to support general practices deliver high quality clinical data and quality improvement processes in general practice.

In Gippsland, 20 general practices have requested access to the eLearning platform. A total of 15 staff members from various general practices have completed these courses.

Digitally enabled Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing offers a holistic and person-centred approach to addressing psychosocial wellbeing that is tailored to an individual's needs.

Social Prescribing provides healthcare professionals with non-medical referral options, complimentary to existing clinical treatments to improve health and wellbeing by addressing the social determinants of health.

Social Prescribing works by enabling general practitioners to link patients with social, therapeutic and practical support provided by voluntary and community support organisations in their local area.

Using Kaleidoscope, healthcare professionals can co-design (between health providers and patients) psychosocial care plans, with measurable goals, tangible actions (i.e. health interventions), social prescriptions and referrals to community organisations.

Based on a patient's goals and needs, a healthcare professional will develop in partnership with the patient, a care plan and social referrals to join a local community group or access a local community service or support. The healthcare professional can send an electronic copy of the care plan to the patient who reports against the agreed actions and goals.

In Gippsland, 13 general practices are now participating in the Digitally Enabled Social Prescribing project.

The in-built Community Service Directory has 503 community groups listed, with 54 registered to receive referrals.

Healthdirect Video Call Service

Healthdirect Video Call Service is a secure online video call service enabling patients to have their doctor's appointment from home.

It also allows doctors to invite other healthcare professionals into the consultation such as a specialist, carer or family member.

In Gippsland, 24 general practices (up 50%) are registered with the Healthdirect Video Call Service.

There were 1,969 general practice telehealth consultations (up 42.57%), provided using the Healthdirect Video Call Service.

"The general practitioner found the platform super easy to use, patients loved that they could keep their appointment, and they were able to have health checks completed by the nurse if required. The nurse found the platform easy to use and commented on how beneficial it was to maintain patient care."

A Gippsland general practice

General Practices

Gippsland PHN is supporting Gippsland general practices implement the remote patient monitoring model of care within their practice.

Across the projects:

- 15 health services are set up in the remote monitoring platform
- 34 health providers trained as care coordinators
- 17 patients recruited in the program



Watch this video from Central Gippsland Health.

Life-changing project for patient

Every morning, a Gippsland man does a simple check of his vital health signs then inputs the information into his mobile phone. He presses “send” and within no time, this information is being checked by a team at Central Gippsland Health (CGH).

If any change in the man’s condition is detected, CGH care coordinators respond. A nurse consultant then liaises with the man’s doctor who can intervene and possibly prevent a hospital admission. If the doctor recommends hospital admission, this early detection of deterioration can shorten his length of stay.

This new digital software platform from Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN), called Lifeguard, allows health professionals to monitor their patients in real-time while they remain in the comfort of their own homes.

CGH is one of the first users of the Remote Patient Monitoring technology in Gippsland, implementing it in February 2020 for patients living with chronic and complex health conditions. It was introduced as part of the CGH Value-Based Health Care (VBHC) program.

Project Manager, Linda Hunt, said the objective was to keep people living with a chronic condition well and at home, living their best life and achieving health outcomes that mattered to them.

“We can identify deterioration and provide early support,” Ms Hunt said. “If we see changes in their vital signs or symptoms, we can intervene and get them the help they require to hopefully prevent a hospital presentation or admission.

“If an admission is necessary, we liaise with our acute healthcare team and alert emergency of their admission. This ensures everyone is on the same page.”

Lifeguard also enables health professionals to easily monitor the health status of multiple patients at once, including the ability to detect patient deterioration early.

Participants in the program enter data into the remote monitoring app daily, using a template for their chronic disease diagnosis. Care coordinators monitor all patients via the app system and if a participant reports outside their threshold, it triggers an alert on the system.

“If a person had a chronic health condition or cared for someone who did, Lifeguard helped take the worry out of knowing what signs or symptoms were normal,” Ms Hunt said. “The app can be used by the patient’s family member, friend or carer if the patient feels unable to use it.

“We have seen an increase in patient activation of Lifeguard,” she said. “Our participants have reported they are able to better monitor their condition by entering in daily data.

“We have found communication with participants via the app to be smooth and easy, with participants finding comfort in the fact that a healthcare professional is readily available to provide support if required.”

CGH aims to eventually have thousands of participants enrolled in the program with innovative technology the key to achieving this objective.

“With Gippsland PHN as a key partner within our project, we are confident to progress this further,” Ms Hunt said.

CGH has now extended the Remote Patient Monitoring Program to Short Term Restorative Care and is exploring other avenues to expand the program.

Evaluation dashboard to support general practitioners

The collection and reporting of data form a foundation building block for knowledge. Now Latrobe Valley general practitioners can use a simple dashboard to measure the quality of their data collection across a range of chronic disease risk factors.

Gippsland PHN created the dashboard to allow individual clinics to see what they are doing well and to identify areas of data collection that could be improved.

One of the goals of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone (LHIZ) – Early Detection and Screening including Tobacco Initiative project is to increase the uptake of risk and opportunistic screening tools by GP clinics in Latrobe. The dashboard is part of this strategy and is the result of a collaboration between LHIZ and Outcome Health, developers of the POLAR Explorer data extraction and reporting software system.

The dashboard provides both Gippsland PHN and clinics with easy to read information about chronic disease risk factor data collection, including smoking rates, measurement of blood pressure, body mass index (BMI), alcohol consumption, cholesterol levels and waist circumference.

Clinics can now track their progress over time to measure if the rate and accuracy of data collection has improved, and compare their results with an average of all Gippsland PHN clinics.

Evidence shows that clients are more receptive to challenging conversations around risk and opportunistic screening for chronic disease if that conversation is initiated by their GP.

Collecting information about alcohol consumption is an excellent starting point for a conversation about safe drinking levels and the complications that can arise because of excessive consumption. This is true for other risk factors including BMI, waist circumference and cholesterol levels.

The dashboard also tracks positive changes in behaviour including the rate of non-smokers, ex-smokers and those who have seen their blood pressure move from high or very high back to within normal ranges.





Health Needs Assessment informs Gippsland PHN's work

Needs Assessments are a contracted deliverable that Primary Health Networks must submit to the Commonwealth Department of Health every three years with annual updates as required.

The Gippsland PHN Health Needs Assessment, due to be submitted by 15 November 2021, involves a full review and re-setting of health priorities. It will inform Gippsland PHN's work from July 2022 through to June 2025.

A Health Needs Assessment is the first stage in the broader PHN commissioning framework. Its purpose is to identify the health needs of the Gippsland population, especially for people most at risk of poor health outcomes.

Identification of health needs is done by analysing available data such as demographics, mortality, morbidity, workforce and service availability and service use. Another important aspect is to learn through engaging with professional stakeholders and community, consumers and carers. An assessment phase is required to bring data and information together to define priorities.

The Gippsland PHN Clinical Councils and Community Advisory Committee play a key advisory role, including identifying emerging issues and contributing to the

assessment phase. An Expert Advisory Group for Priority Setting has been formed to involve key stakeholders in a more transparent method of assessing the evidence.

At their February 2021 meetings, Clinical Councils and the Community Advisory Committee reviewed data and emerging issues related to current priorities. At the May 2021 meetings, the groups participated in an interactive Mentimeter session to rate priorities and start thinking about outcomes and indicators for priorities. The groups then completed a survey in June 2021 to finalise priority ratings and provide further input to the outcomes and indicators.

See the Gippsland PHN website <https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/health-planning/population-health/> for more information about population health planning at Gippsland PHN.

The Tell Gippsland PHN about healthcare in your community survey and interviews is one way people in Gippsland can tell us about their experiences.

Go to the Tell Gippsland PHN website <https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/health-planning/tell-gippsland-phn/> for more information.



Population Health data is accessible to everyone

Issues papers are used to present a summary of Population Health data in an easy to read format which is accessible to the community and other stakeholders.

Data is accessed, interpreted and presented in an easy to understand format to describe the issue for Gippsland.

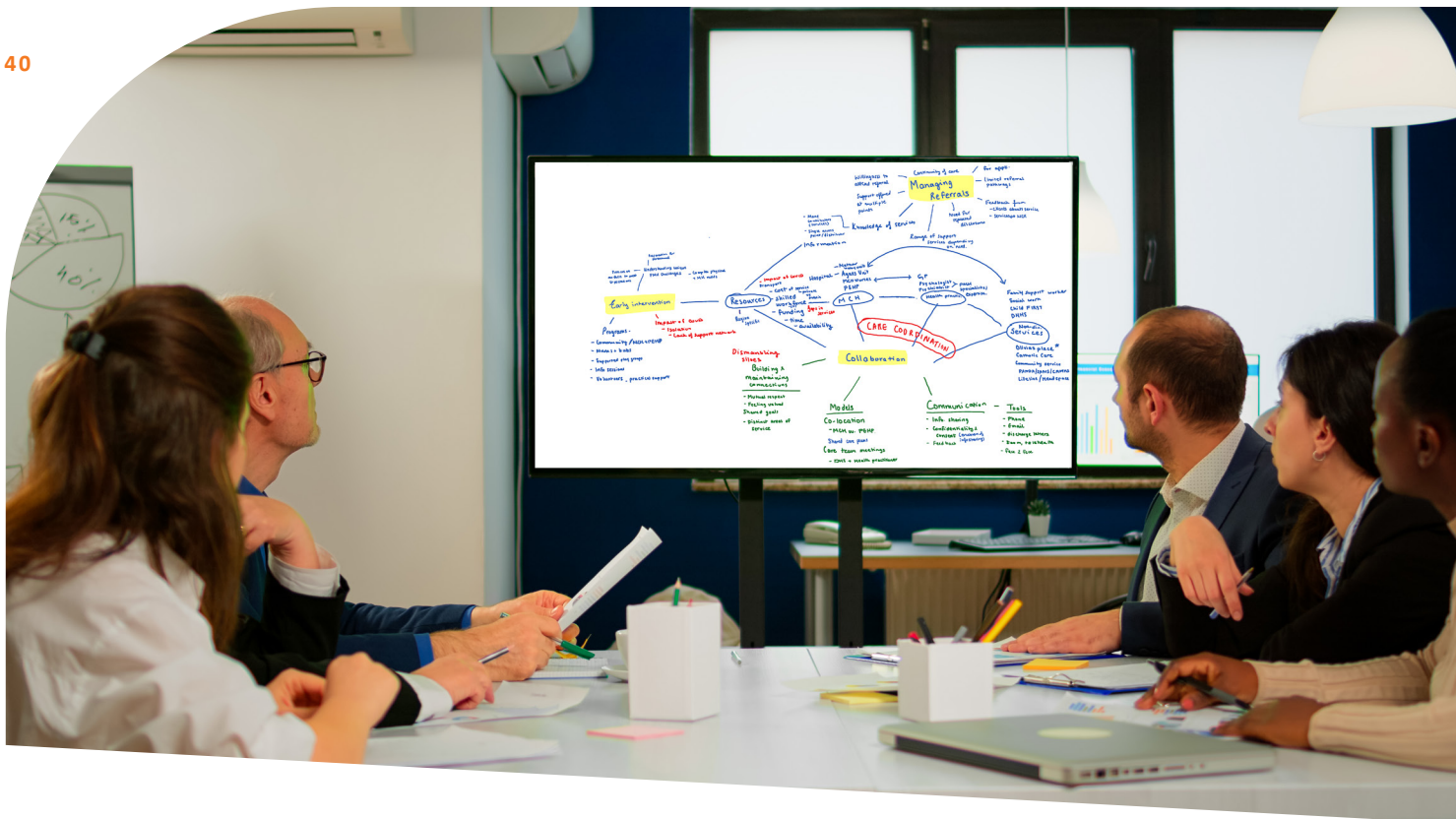
Potential outcomes can include building knowledge in the community about health issues and promoting Gippsland PHN investments and services in response to health issues and priorities.

The papers can be used to inform the community and for advocacy to governments and other leaders to influence policy and program development. The information can also be used to inform investment decisions.

In 2020/21, the following issues papers were published:

- Dental health in Gippsland December 2020
- Primary Care - keeping people out of hospital December 2020
- Primary Care - Managing the main health issues 2021
- Pandemics and disasters - the value of integrated care 2021





Summer scholars support research project

Gippsland PHN is committed to working collaboratively with university partners and research institutes to improve the quality of health services available and tailor them to better meet the community's needs.

An up-to-date comprehensive needs assessment is the foundation for progressing Gippsland PHN's priority issues and improved partnerships with key stakeholders, based on a common understanding of health needs.

In 2020, the Monash Rural Health Summer Scholarship Program included the opportunity to work with Gippsland PHN. Five local students were accepted for two, three-week placements in December 2020 and February 2021.

Monash Rural Health and Gippsland PHN developed a joint program based on topics provided by Gippsland PHN to support work to update the Health Needs Assessment in 2021. The summer scholars received training on literature searching, quantitative and qualitative research methods and ethics.

Study topics included:

- Improving access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people in Gippsland
- Planning a community survey in Gippsland
- Priority setting method for population health planning to inform Gippsland PHN Health Needs Assessment
- Support Tell Gippsland PHN about dementia study
- How vulnerable families can be better supported to help children thrive in their first 1,000 days

The Gippsland PHN and Monash Rural Health teams were impressed and inspired by the scholars' passion and quality of work undertaken during their placements. Importantly, the scholars' work was helpful to progress the Gippsland PHN's Health Needs Assessment.

Gippsland PHN extends its gratitude to the scholars and wishes them well in their future endeavours.



Research integral in primary healthcare

High quality general practice research is integral in ensuring the Gippsland community can access evidence-based primary healthcare.

Gippsland Primary Health Network is committed to working collaboratively with university partners and research institutes to improve the quality of health services available and tailor them to better meet the community's needs.

Gippsland PHN's Data Governance, Ethics and Research Group exercises a strategic and advisory role to all data governance, research and ethics activities by Gippsland PHN and oversees the security and integrity of data shared with the PHN by general practices, commissioned service providers and system partners.

Gippsland PHN seeks ethics approval for research projects through the Monash University's Human research Ethics Committee. In 2020/21, three applications were sought and successful.

Gippsland PHN collaborated on four key primary care research projects during 2020/21:

- Digital Health Maturity Assessment project with Gippsland general practice. This is a component of the One Good Community General Practice Program which assesses key technical, cultural and change factors to provide targeted assistance to practices based on their current capabilities and ensure that any new digital health solutions or models of care implemented by the PHN can be undertaken with the appropriate level of support to make them successful.
- HepLOGIC: Hepatitis and liver cancer outcomes in general practice: an intervention collaboration. The Victorian Cancer Agency funded this project (2019 – 2023) in partnership with The Doherty Institute (lead), The Kirby Institute, University of Notre Dame (Sydney), Hepatitis Victoria, the Cancer Council Victoria, Outcome Health and PHNs (Gippsland PHN, East Melbourne PHN, South East Melbourne PHN).
- COVID-19 – utilising near real-time electronic general practice data to establish effective care and best-practice policy. This project is based on a collaborative relationship involving the Digital Health Cooperative Research Centre (DHCRC), Macquarie University, Outcome Health, PHNs (Gippsland PHN, East Melbourne PHN, South East Melbourne PHN), and the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia Quality Assurance Programs, with participation from Central and Eastern Sydney and South Western Sydney PHNs.
- Strengthening mental health capacity and service integration in primary postnatal care in Victoria. This project is funded by the 2019 Monash Partners Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and is a collaboration between Gippsland PHN, Monash University, Monash Health, Central West Gippsland PCP, Wellington PCP, Department of Health and Municipal Association of Victoria.

Grady's pitch won quit smoking campaign competition

Latrobe Valley resident, Grady Just, was the winner of the Pitch to Quit 2021 competition.

Grady presented a pitch highlighting that seeking support can make a big difference in a quit attempt and the entire process is a lot easier with someone by your side.

Aspiring creatives from across the Latrobe Valley were invited to pitch innovative ideas for the quit smoking campaign competition that went one step further this year.

Delivered by Gippsland PHN as part of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone (LHIZ), supported by the Victorian Government and Quit Victoria, this year's Pitch to Quit competition gave participants the chance to workshop their pitch with a panel of industry experts. Grady's pitch was eventually selected to be produced into a localised campaign suitable for platforms like television, radio and newspapers.

Grady's passion for a localised quit smoking campaign has been long standing. He submitted a pitch during the competition's inaugural year in 2018 where he was named a finalist but was pipped at the post.

This year, five finalists were named and invited to participate in an online workshop where they received \$1,000 for their time. Their submissions were scored again by independent judges following discussions in the workshops and the winner announced.

Grady produced a creative campaign concept that was further developed throughout the workshop process. He received \$4,500 in prize money and was supported in working closely with local industry experts to develop his pitch into a full media campaign that was shared across Latrobe Valley.

For more information about Pitch to Quit 2020, go to: <https://pitchtoquit.gphn.org.au> and follow the campaign on Facebook at facebook.com/PitchToQuit.



Watch Grady's video.



Project delivers best practice smoking cessation care

The Pharmacy Smoking Cessation Project aims to build the knowledge and capacity of Latrobe pharmacists, pharmacy assistants and staff to deliver best-practice smoking cessation care.

Community pharmacists have been identified as healthcare providers who are well placed to advise and assist with management of smoking cessation due to their frequent and accessible contact with patients, dispensary of pharmacology therapies and ability to respond immediately to patients' needs.

Gippsland PHN is delivering a range of smoking cessation initiatives through the State Government's investment in the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone.

Incentives have been directed towards pharmacists to enable them to provide services efficiently, while overcoming common barriers such as time constraints, lack of financial incentives for pharmacists, and a lack of knowledge and skills to support people to quit smoking.

This project enables pharmacists and pharmacy staff to deliver best practice smoking cessation support, through delivery of the three-step Brief Intervention Model. Quit Victoria delivered a tailored online webinar to participating Latrobe pharmacists and pharmacy staff.

Three pharmacies located across Latrobe are currently participating in the project. Localised information resources have also been developed to support the program and are currently being displayed in participating pharmacies. Baseline data has been collected relating to Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) sales, Quitline referrals and use of promotional materials, as well as an online survey completed by pharmacists and pharmacy staff.

This project is in the final stages of implementation, with follow up evaluation being undertaken.



Tell Gippsland PHN

I'm stressed ...
having a lot of
problems with
words ... things now
just come out of
nowhere

I think to have a
phone number to ring
and just say look, are
we on the right track?
I felt quite isolated at
times

Health professionals,
of all backgrounds,
still do have a lack of
knowledge

Tell Gippsland PHN about dementia

In Gippsland, dementia is the second most common cause of death. It is estimated that around 6,000 people are currently living with dementia and that is expected to rise to around 22,000 people by 2050.

Gippsland PHN has worked with Monash University to learn more about dementia in Gippsland.

Interviews with people living with dementia, their family and carers and professionals working with dementia supports and services were conducted throughout 2020. The findings highlighted that people living with dementia in Gippsland often do not have their needs met.

Suggestions about how things can be improved were provided from the perspective of people living with dementia, their family and carers, and professionals. A local summary of dementia services and supports was also created.

The next step is a survey based on the themes from interviews to allow more people to tell us what is important to them. The information gathered will be used to inform the Gippsland PHN Health Needs Assessment which is being updated during 2021.



Gippsland Respiratory Clinics provide vital testing service to community

Gippsland's six GP-led Respiratory Assessment Clinics, set up in 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic, had their contracts extended several times over the last 12 months and will continue operating until 31 December 2021.

Respiratory clinics were set up nationally by the Australian Government, with support from Primary Health Networks, from 28 April 2020 and clearly demonstrated the importance of the service to their local communities by testing people for COVID-19.

The Australian Department of Health (DoH) initially funded 100 private practice respiratory clinics across Australia to provide dedicated services to people with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms, in addition to services available within public hospitals and general practices. Their contracts have been extended several times.

Gippsland's six clinics are located in Bairnsdale, Sale, Morwell, Warragul, Wonthaggi and Foster.

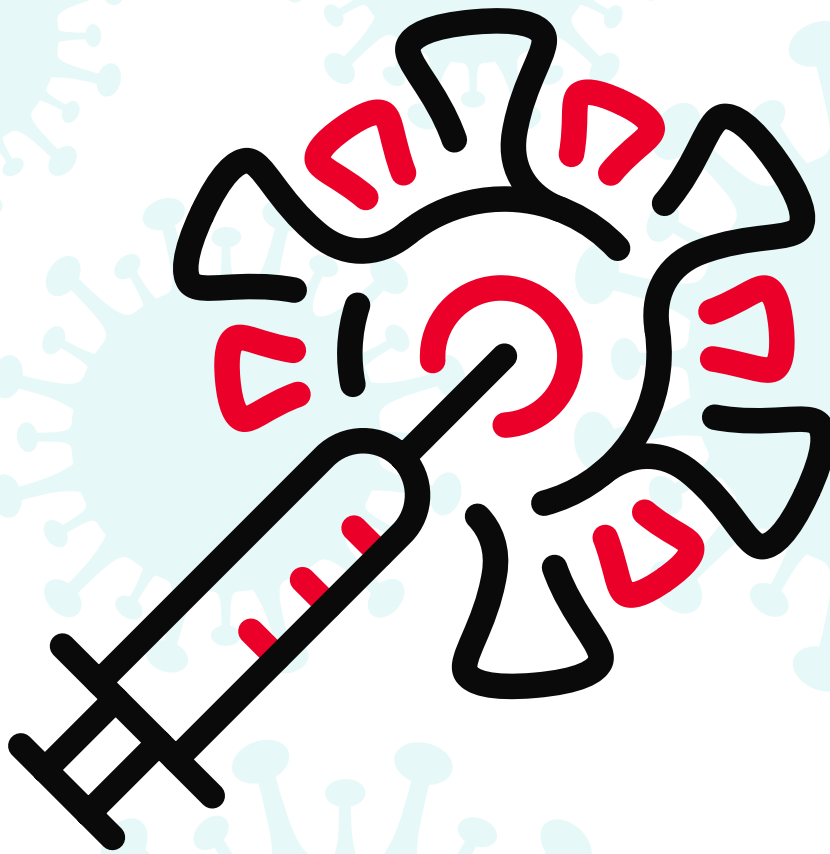
The clinics provide people who have mild symptoms with a complete respiratory assessment with a doctor or clinic nurse. Patients are tested for COVID-19 and assessed for other respiratory illnesses as well, with test results sent back to a person's doctor.

All Gippsland clinics have shown their ability to be agile and innovative in terms of meeting the high infection control standards and maintaining a reliable service in an ever-changing pandemic environment.

The respiratory clinics reduce the risk of further transmission of COVID-19, help to optimise the use of available stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and help reduce the pressure on hospital emergency departments.

The dedicated premises are staffed by existing general practice doctors and nurses.

Gippsland PHN continues to work closely with the clinics, all aligned with existing general practices, in their respiratory testing role and now as part of the national COVID-19 vaccination rollout.



Gippsland general practices join the national COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Twenty-two Gippsland general practices, including the six Gippsland Respiratory Clinics, started administering the COVID-19 vaccine from Monday 22 March 2021 as part of the Australian Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy.

In addition to the general practices, vaccines were also administered by the Gippsland Respiratory Clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

Initially doses were limited so priority groups were among the first to receive the vaccine.

Those initial general practices, approved by the Australian Department of Health to participate in Phase 1b of the vaccine rollout, received their supply of vaccines progressively over the following weeks.

In Phase 1b, eligible people included anyone over 70 years old, healthcare workers, younger adults with an underlying condition and high-risk workers like emergency services personnel and meat processing workers. It also included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 55.

Another 13 general practices who expressed interest to join Phase 2 of the rollout started administering Astra Zeneca from 21 June 2021.

Wellington Respiratory Clinic started administering Pfizer vaccine on 25 May 2021 with the other Respiratory and GP clinics to come on board in July.

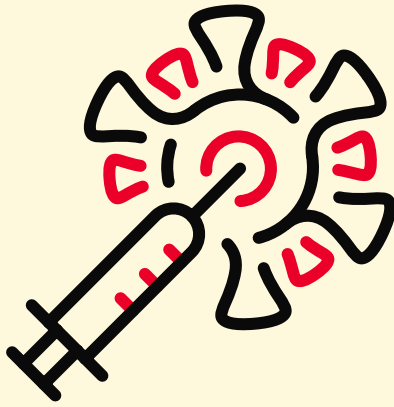
Aged care

Gippsland PHN facilitated the rollout of the Pfizer vaccine to residents in 47 private Residential Aged Care Facilities across Gippsland.

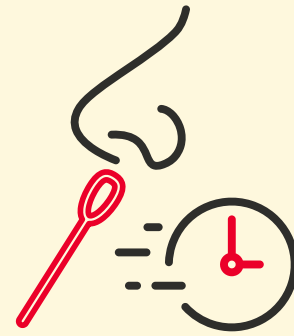
The Australian Department of Health contracted Aspen Medical to administer the vaccine at the respective facilities.

By 7 May 2021, all residents that consented had received their second dose.

Vaccines



Tests



Respiratory Clinics

16,758 24%

56,052 49%

General practice

52,361 76%

58,074 51%

Total

69,119

114,126

* Note: some overlap exists between general practice and respiratory clinic activity

There were a total of 69,000 COVID-19 vaccines provided in a Gippsland general practice during 2020-21.

About a quarter of these, or 16,800 vaccines, have so far been provided in one of six Respiratory Clinics (starting in March 2021).

There were a total of 114,000 COVID-19 tests conducted in a Gippsland general practice during 2020-21.

Busiest weeks (across Respiratory Clinics and general practice)

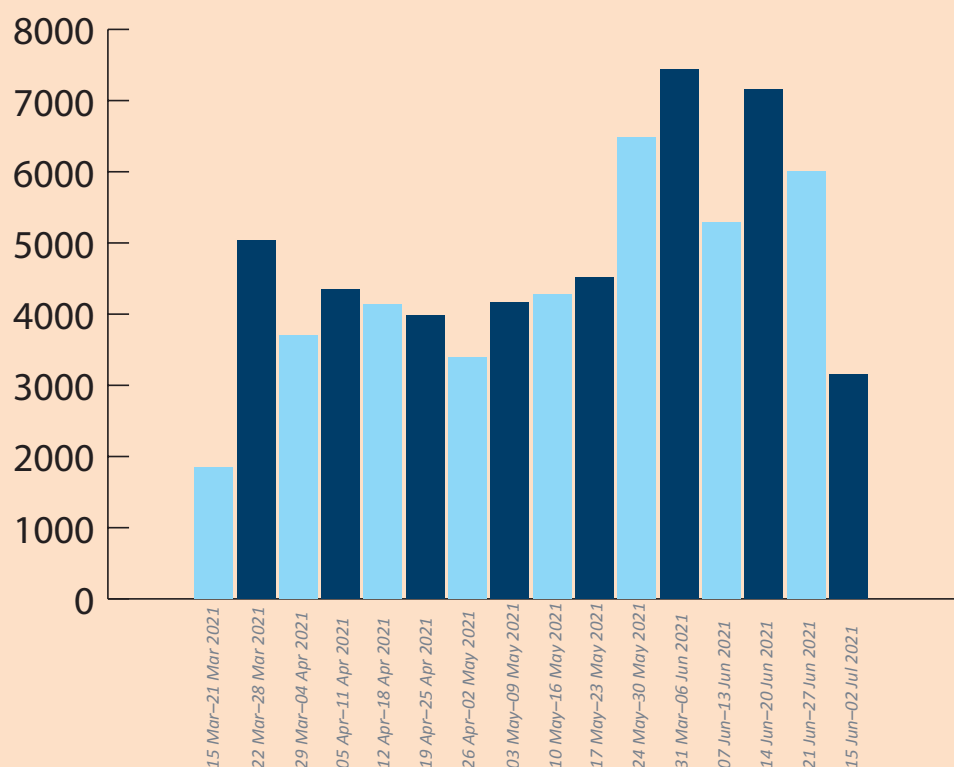
Vaccines

Over 7,000

Testing

Over 6,000

COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Gippsland showing weekly numbers in general practice (including Respiratory Clinics and general practice) for 2021 so far:





GPs respond to vaccination rollout

In the rapidly changing times of the coronavirus pandemic, it was essential that Gippsland general practices were supported with up-to-date and relevant information on COVID-19 and the vaccination rollout.

Gippsland PHN Regional Services Officers played a vital role in enabling this strong local capability with the support they have given, and continue to give, to general practices.

As well as providing updated guidelines and being available to answer questions from clinic staff, essential personal protective equipment (PPE) was supplied to general practices across the region. Immunisation appointment cards and information flyers for customers were also provided.

During 2020-21, Gippsland PHN built on educational events provided previously with a further four webinars delivered to general practice staff. These were well received with 291 participants linking in to these online sessions.

These webinars included information on:

- transmission, risk and prevention in the practice
- understanding the virus and maintaining a safe practice, remaining alert, staff fatigue and clinic role in vaccines
- rollout and training to administer the vaccine
- vaccine eligibility and the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines

Comments received from general practices on the support they received from Gippsland PHN include:

- “The support we have received from Gippsland PHN is greatly appreciated.”
- “When we are overwhelmed with information, Gippsland PHN has been a great support and provided relevant information to support our practice.”
- “Receiving phone calls from support officers is a great way to share what is working and highlight issues the clinic is experiencing. The practices feel that Gippsland PHN is listening.”

Barry first in line for his vaccination

Barry Johnson, 82, from Moe was first in line for his vaccine at Central Gippsland Family Practice in Moe on Monday 22 March 2021.

His GP, Dr Mohammad Mustafa, was just as happy to give his patient the vaccination.

"I have been so lonely over the last 12 months because I have tried to stay at home and keep safe," Barry told

the throng of media who captured the event. "I can't wait to get back out in the community among my family and friends."

Barry is pictured getting his COVID-19 vaccination from Dr Mohammad Mustafa at Central Gippsland Family Practice.



"I can't wait to get back out in the community among my family and friends,"



Training and events adapted to COVID-19 restrictions

The education program at Gippsland PHN provides professional development and education to the primary health sector workforce. Education events are planned in response to identified needs and priorities in the region and delivered in a variety of formats to allow access for all primary healthcare workers in building professional skills and capacity.

Despite restrictions associated with COVID-19, the team continued to deliver regular high-quality education, reaching audiences through a combination of live online and face-to-face events.

Although some education could not transition to online, virtual network meetings, information sessions and workshops were offered with an eager uptake from Gippsland health professionals.

Adopting the new technology and platforms for delivery of education allowed for continued interactivity and discussion among participants and presenters. The return to face-to-face activities enabled the delivery of many postponed and rescheduled workshops although the success of online training ensures this mode of delivery will continue.

The most successful events have been those delivered during lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Practice Infection Control workshops and Vaccine Information sessions attracted 214 participants and the Suicide Bereavement webinars had nearly 200 participants over four sessions.

Continued collaboration with the Gippsland Region Palliative Care Consortium (GRPCC) delivered a four-part webinar series on the Time of Dying, followed up by an e-forum on how COVID has crystallised the core issues of end of life. More than 260 participants attended across the five sessions with GPs gaining CPD points through RACGP and ACRRM. The GRPCC also conducted another 10 Therapeutic Communication Skills workshops to practices, bush nurses and Monash medical students.

Subsidised Chronic Disease training saw 52 practice nurses take up the opportunity through the Screening and Identifying Chronic Disease in Primary Health course. This program was delivered through BenchmarqueIQ and provided nurses with accredited training through 60 hours of online learning and workplace assessment.



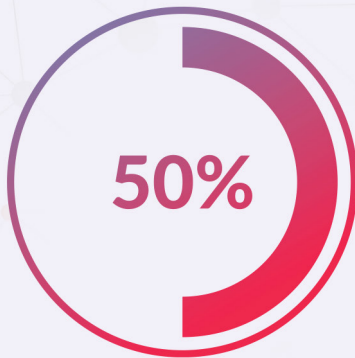
1,611

participants attended

13



face-to-face sessions



GPs and practice nurses

comprised 50% of participants



52

online events

27



education activities received

62 CPD points through RACGP
and ACRRM

2020 Gippsland Primary Health Awards

Winners



Gippsland's primary healthcare sector was on show at the 2020 Gippsland Primary Health Awards on 18 November 2020.

The award winners across five sections were announced and honoured by a large gathering of guests.

Gippsland Primary Health Network Chair, Therese Tierney and Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, congratulated the winners, praising their respective entries which had helped make a difference to their communities.

Award winners

Improved access to health services

The Complete Therapies Unit at Gippsland Lakes Complete Health

The Complete Therapies Team remodelled and responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic to safely meet community need. Virtual care for all allied health programs, except for podiatry, hand therapy and high priority speech pathology, became the norm. The team supported staff and clients to use technology and provided resources to complement virtual programs. Innovative service models are now core business.



Prevention

South Coast Prevention Team and South Coast Water Partnership

The Tap Water Every Day social marketing campaign aimed to reduce sugar sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption and increase tap water consumption of teenage males aged 13 to 18 years across the South Coast Region. This project utilised a unique co-design approach, where a cohort of the target audience both developed and delivered project interventions. While the project was delivered on a small budget of \$30,000, the reach and impact were amplified through the breadth of project partners engaged, infiltrating schools, homes, sporting club and the general community. Evaluation findings highlighted a reduction in SSB consumption and increase in tap water consumption in the cohort. Additionally, the co-design approach reached a typically hard to engage cohort and left them empowered to make change in their school communities.



Indigenous health

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH) and Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association

The Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) and GLCH Health Promotion teams have developed a successful partnership working together to prevent smoking. The teams developed a resource package which is designed to go into schools prior to workshops with information for schools and parents. The Tackling Smoking Resource kit includes a children's story book explaining the difference between good smoke and bad smoke written by TIS team member, Terrick Mullett-Morris, who is a proud Gunaikurnai man. The artwork is all locally produced by another Gunaikurnai man on the TIS team.



Innovative support for diverse communities

Headspace Bairnsdale

Headspace Bairnsdale's Autism Spectrum Disorder Games group began in 2017 as a face-to-face social group for young people with autism in response to young people and families requesting social supports. Due to COVID-19, the group successfully moved online and maintained steady attendance of between three and six participants attending weekly. The approach has changed considerably from playing board games in the centre to more verbal games like trivia quizzes, Zoom Pictionary and others. Participants have been challenged by this but have enjoyed it. Key benefits include social connections and fostering discussion on shared interests.



Integration and partnerships—joint winners

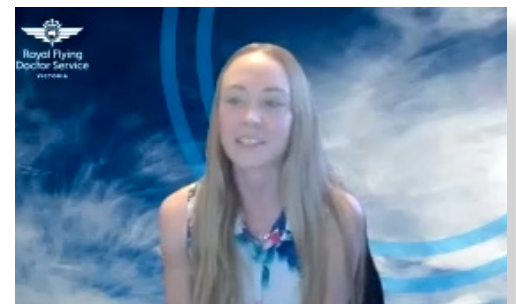
Wellways NewAccess Team

The NewAccess program is a collaboration to deliver improved health services for Gippsland. NewAccess employs lived experience locals from across the Gippsland region, assisted by using extensive peer networks and upskilling non-clinical coaches to provide low intensity cognitive behavioural therapy. The strength of the relationship between Beyond Blue, Flinders University and Wellways provides a positive open environment to support staff in their ongoing development, providing an additional skilled and motivated workforce. The NewAccess program can be accessed by a broad section of the community, including mental health workers, laying the foundation for achieving positive outcomes and improved access to services. Positive feedback from participants promotes an option that offers easy access and relieves pressure on the limited number of mental health professionals in Gippsland.



Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria & Relationships Australia Victoria

The Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria (RFDS) and Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) formed a partnership in a year full of challenges. RFDS and RAV worked together to ensure mental health and wellbeing support was provided to individuals, families and frontline personnel who were affected by the East Gippsland bushfires. The Bushfire Counselling and Support Service was established in February 2020 and eight mental health clinicians recruited to cover the region. A collaborative intake and referral process was developed to ensure a streamlined process for community members and referrers. Each partner used their local knowledge and partnerships across the region to ensure that mental health and wellbeing support was available for those affected by the East Gippsland bushfires.



Reconciliation Action Plan a priority

Reconciliation and Cultural Safety is a national priority for Primary Health Networks including Gippsland PHN who is committed to working with stakeholders to progress the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

In February 2021, Gippsland PHN commissioned consultant, Brian Stevens, to guide it through the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan, initially working with the organisation's Diversity and Cultural Safety Working Group.

Brian is a proud Gunaikurnai man who originates from Orbost in East Gippsland and has a deep understanding of local cultural knowledge, Aboriginal protocols and obligation.

He has facilitated planning sessions with the working group, facilitated two all-staff information sessions and completed three internal workshops prior to starting development of the RAP.

The workshop series was structured to support Gippsland PHN's understanding of what reconciliation means to the organisation and its communities, and to ultimately develop Gippsland PHN's vision for reconciliation.

The working group used the Reconciliation Australia guidelines to develop specific actions and deliverables for Gippsland PHN's commitment:

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Governance

Emerging themes from the workshops included:

- Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at Gippsland PHN.
- The importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Gippsland.



- The need to improve communication and ensure it is culturally appropriate, acknowledging the value and importance of deep listening.
- Learning from local communities to build trust and help heal.
- Recognition that Gippsland is a very diverse and unique region, therefore tailored approaches may be necessary.

The working group has now developed a draft vision for reconciliation: to listen deeply, build trust and relationships, foster collaboration with the community and learn how Gippsland PHN can make a positive difference in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait community. It will work towards closing the gap in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enjoy long and healthy lives.



Consultant Brian Stevens is guiding Gippsland PHN staff through the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Importantly it will:

- **Listen** – understand and develop a shared understanding of lived experiences
- **Learn** – embrace new knowledge to move forward together
- **Trust** – establish community pathways to access Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services
- **Heal** – recognise the importance of connection to family, place, culture, and community

The next steps for Gippsland PHN will be further engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and with their input, finalise the vision statement and finalise the actions within the draft RAP. It will then be shared with Gippsland PHN Clinical Councils and the Community Advisory Committee before being presented to the Gippsland PHN Board for consideration and on to Reconciliation Australia for approval.



Gippsland PHN strives for best practice

In 2021, Gippsland PHN received renewed accreditation under QIC Health and Community Services Standards (7th Edition).

Being accredited under the QIC Health and Community Services Standards (7th Edition) is a significant aspect of Gippsland PHN's Quality Improvement Systems. It assures staff, funding bodies and all stakeholders that Gippsland PHN strives for, and successfully maintains, excellence in quality and performance.

Through governance, management systems, consumer and community engagement, diversity and cultural appropriateness and our commissioning activity, Gippsland PHN looks for ways to improve as an essential activity of everyday practice.

Gippsland PHN consistently puts in place contract management to:

- achieve and maintain quality care that meets consumer/patient needs
- monitor outcomes in consumer/patient care and seek opportunities to improve both the care and its results.

The organisation constantly strives for best practice by learning from others to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of processes.



2021 Gippsland PHN benchmarking study - Building Forward

The theme for Gippsland PHN's 2021 annual staff survey was 'Building Forward' with a focus on the organisation's ever changing and challenging environments, and how a strong foundation is crucial for a PHN to adapt, innovate and grow.

All staff were invited to participate in a confidential online survey covering their:

- Expectations of our organisation
- Current working environments
- Team dynamics
- Values and culture
- Leadership.

Results were benchmarked against benchmarking norms, previous surveys and other PHNs who participate in the survey. The results identify successes and improvement opportunities.

42 out of 43
staff participated or **98%**

81% of staff believe Gippsland PHN is a great place to work against a benchmarking norm of **69%**

Gippsland PHN maintained a culture of success for the third year running with a **76%** engagement score

Overall, employees are very close-knit, cohesive, focused, positive about tackling problems and have a **'can do'** mentality

Top 3 reasons for being a great place to work:
Our colleagues
Our community mindedness
Our effective teamwork

Top 4 staff expectation areas are:
Support
Respect
Flexibility
Direction

In the value-based questions of respect, honesty, fairness and equality, staff scored Gippsland PHN higher than the PHN benchmarking norms in all values

There was **'high trust'** in Executive Management and a **'climate of trust and respect throughout the organisation'**

Our Board of Directors



Ms Therese Tierney (Chair)

Therese has had more than 40 years' experience in the health sector in CEO and senior management roles since 1994. She has been a CEO in metro Melbourne and regional Victoria and in both the private and public health sectors.



Ms Julie Rogalsky (Deputy Chair)

Julie has more than 20 years' experience in the Gippsland health sector having worked in the general practice, hospital, community health, government and GP training sectors. She supports strong local primary healthcare, especially to more marginalised populations.



Ms Anne Peek

Anne has served as a CEO and non-executive director in both the public and private healthcare sectors for more than 30 years. She has strong connections in the healthcare sector and at government levels with a passion and expertise in quality assurance in healthcare.



Dr Nola Maxfield

Nola is a procedural general practitioner in a large teaching practice and has more than 20 years' experience in a wide range of health-related organisations. Based in Wonthaggi, Bass Coast, her involvement spans local, state and national bodies.

**Mr Murray Bruce**

Murray is a strong leader and an experienced commercial lawyer, specialising in strategic planning, project management, risk management and governance. He has successfully worked across all levels of government, many private and not-for-profit organisations and local community groups.

**Ms Kellie O'Callaghan**

Kellie is recognised for her strong leadership in health, community services and governance. She served for many years as the Chair of the Latrobe Regional Hospital Board and is a long-serving Latrobe City Councillor and former Mayor.

**Ms Melissa Bastian**

Melissa has held a long standing interest in the health and wellbeing of Gippslanders and is keen to continue to contribute to the important area of primary health. Melissa has a diverse background and experience in a variety of industries including health, banking, law and education.

**Dr Peter Trye**

Peter brings extensive experience from primary care and the hospital system to this role on the Gippsland PHN Board. He has served as a Director of Medical Services for the last 15 years in a number of public hospitals both in Gippsland and Melbourne.

**Alex Aeschlimann**

Alex is a passionate Gippslander, with ten years' experience on the board of Gippsland Southern Health Service (GSHS) and has recently retired as the President and Chairman.

Our Executive Team



Amanda Proposch
Chief Executive Officer

Ms Amanda Proposch is a healthcare management professional with 15 years' experience in general practice management and more than 10 years' experience in private and public hospital nursing roles, including senior management and healthcare redesign. Amanda has a track record of substantial contribution in the application of improvement methodology in healthcare, coaching and developing high performing teams, and elevating operational efficiency, productivity and consumer experience.



Angela Jacob
Executive Manager Operations

Angela has 30 years' experience in healthcare, initially as a physiotherapist with an interest in women's health and later as general manager at Latrobe Regional Hospital. Her qualifications include Master of Health Service Management. She is a Certified Health Executive and Fellow of the Australasian College of Health Service Management. Angela also has a strong interest in governance through her role as a non-executive director at Yallambee Aged Care Traralgon and she is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Steve Morgan
Executive Manager Corporate Services

Mr Steve Morgan is an accountant with more than 25 years' experience in senior management roles, including chief financial officer in not-for-profit and commercial organisations in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. Before joining Gippsland PHN, Steve's most recent role was Financial Services Manager at Castle Personnel Services, a disability employment provider in NSW.

Advisory Committees

A key feature of Gippsland PHN is the Sub-regional Clinical Councils and the Community Advisory Committee, ensuring community, local services and general practice is a major contributor to the organisation.

It is integral to Gippsland PHN that general practice, other health professionals as well as consumers are centrally involved in the planning and decision making about health solutions.

Community Advisory Committee	Bass Coast and South Gippsland Clinical Council	Latrobe and Baw Baw Clinical Council	Wellington and East Gippsland Clinical Council
Ms Anne Peek (Chair)	Dr Sue Comerford (Chair)	Dr Letitia Clark (Chair)	Dr Patrick Kinsella (Chair)
Manfred Krautschneider	Samantha Park	Mitchell Kraan	Dr Myles Chapman
Catriona Knothe	Anna Langley	Audra Fenton	Brendon Moar
Marion Byrne	Carlene Hurst	Elizabeth Plunkett	Elisabeth Wearne
Sue Kearney	Francis Sullivan	Leanne Coupland	Margaret Griffiths
Paul Apostoleris	Kristen Yates Matthews	Alison Snell	Owen Connolly
Eleanor Mitchell	Soetkin Beerten	Helen Rawlings	Paula Morgan
Dianne Goeman	Tania Findlay	Dr Sonya Moncrieff	Sophie Wilson
Sue Gaffney	Alice Bradley	Stuart Jillings	
John Lawrence	Dr Anne Gleeson (Until January 2021)		
Susan Armstrong	Gayle Bloch		
Pam McGrath	Dr Mike Fitzgerald		
Kristin Fox	Selina Northover		

Financial report

The 2020-21 financial statements of Gippsland Health Network Limited were prepared by McLean Delmo Bentleys Audit Pty Ltd and were completed in accordance with the applicable Australian Accounting Standards, reduced disclosure requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012.

Gippsland Health Network Limited utilises accrual accounting based on historical cost, modified where required.

Summary Statement Of Profit/Loss

	2020-21		2019-20	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Income from all sources		30,403,329		25,313,622
Total Expenditure for all programs		30,208,300		24,932,292
Surplus/(Deficit)		195,029		381,330

Total income comprised:

Government grants	28,749,014	24,859,116
Other grants	811,917	(85,566)
Other income	842,398	540,072

Statement Of Financial Position

	2021-21		2019-20	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Assets				
Current	16,890,267		18,755,319	
Non-Current	823,858	17,714,125	1,153,923	19,909,242
Liabilities				
Current	14,877,555		17,103,610	
Non-Current	528,261	15,405,816	692,352	17,795,962
Net Assets		2,308,309		2,113,280
Equity				
Retained Earnings		2,308,309		2,113,280

The detailed 2020-21 audited financial statements for Gippsland Health Network Limited can be found on the Gippsland PHN website at www.gphn.org.au.

Quick Links


Artwork represents a journey of healing - Page 2.

 Watch Alfie's video

Thank you to our Gippsland primary care workforce - Page 4.

 Watch video


Nowa Nowa Welcomes Back Tourists - Page 8

 Watch this video of The Nowa Nowa community launching a promotional video to attract tourists back to town

NewAccess for people finding it hard to manage life stressors - Page 24

 Watch Sam's video

HeadtoHelp - a response to the coronavirus pandemic - Page 26

 Watch HeadtoHelp video


HeadtoHelp - Page 27

 Watch Tom's video

Remote Patient Monitoring - Page 35

 Watch video from Central Gippsland Health

Grady's pitch won quit smoking campaign competition - Page 42

 Watch Grady's winning video



Our locations

11 Seymour Street Traralgon, VIC 3844 (Main Office)

13 McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi, VIC 3995

183 Main Street, Bairnsdale, VIC 3875

Phone: 03 5175 5444

Email: info@gphn.org.au

Web: gphn.org.au