



ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023

phn
GIPPSLAND

An Australian Government Initiative



Acknowledgement of Country

Gippsland PHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people/s as the traditional Custodians of Country across the Gippsland region.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people/s continuing connection to Land, Water and Community.

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People/s, Cultures, and their Elders past and present.

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Message from Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

In another remarkable year, Gippsland Primary Health Network has gone from strength to strength as it has embarked on new programs and embraced the reforms in the mental health, aged care and primary care systems.

The theme of this year's annual report is "Ask the Question" as we reflect on the importance of clarity of purpose and being committed to our vision.

The waning of COVID related activity as we learn, as a community, to live with the virus, has created more time and energy to progress and reflect on our strategic objectives. Throughout the year, we consulted with a range of stakeholders to refresh those objectives and align them with current and foreshadowed reforms in the primary care space.



Therese Tierney Chair Gippsland PHN

Therese Tierney

We asked the question – are they still relevant, appropriate and achievable? The new Strategic Plan 2023-2025 heralds a sharpened focus on outcomes that matter to achieve the quintuple aim of a more cost-effective system, which delivers a better patient and provider experience, and improved population health, in a way that advances equity for all.

At the Board's Strategic Planning Workshop, we heard from Dr Walid Jammal who laid out his vision of the future of primary care. The recommendations from the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce, and the subsequent budget measures announced by the Australian Government, will enable PHNs to play a key role in shaping the future where patients are at the centre of decision making and multidisciplinary teams work together to manage chronic disease and coordinate complex care.

In alignment with these reforms, the culmination of an extensive consultation process with community and providers has led to the development of a service model which went to tender for our new Community Led Integrated Health Care Program.

We are grateful to the consumers, carers, clinicians and service providers who co-designed and co-developed the program and we are looking forward to evaluating its impact and outcomes through our successful Primary Rural Innovative Multidisciplinary Models (PRIMM) grant. The PRIMM grant is one of six awarded nationally to develop and assess multidisciplinary models of care that respond to local community need and support the health workforce to address service gaps.

The rapidly changing landscape in primary care, as both state and federal governments grapple with issues of access to services and workforce challenges, led us to ask the question about our role in building and supporting workforce capability to adapt and respond to current and future change.

Our Remote Patient Monitoring program is an example of how the PHN has worked closely with general practices to upskill in their use of technology and digital platforms to unlock capacity for the practices to monitor patients with chronic disease at volume whilst enabling patients to self-report their vital signs and relevant outcome indicators in real time.



Our partnership with the Victorian Department of Health through projects such as Maximising Cancer Screening, Cancer Shared Care models, and Improving Eye Health; and the commissioning of Priority Primary Care Centres has enabled us to answer the question about our role in local coordination and integration between acute and primary care. Ongoing collaboration with the state through the Victorian/Tasmanian Primary Health Alliance (VTPHNA) will be key to leveraging these opportunities to ensure co-ordinated and localised solutions for Gippsland.

After asking ourselves the question about how as an organisation we can advance improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was approved by Reconciliation Australia in February. A wonderful event was held in April where we said “Kanitba” (thank you) to those who generously helped us grow in our understanding of our need to deeply listen and walk beside our First Nations communities as we strive to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s rights to equity of access to culturally safe and inclusive primary health care in Gippsland.

As an organisation our message to community is “Waru ninbar thooloo njinde” - we sit with you-as we commit to the actions of the RAP.

A revised advisory group structure was launched this year following an evaluation process which asked the question about how to best facilitate and capture the highly valued advice and feedback from our Clinical Councils and Community Advisory Committee. We continue to be grateful for the contribution of their time and insights which richly inform and shape our work.

Our work during 2022-2023, as presented in this annual report, was enabled by our skilled and knowledgeable Directors and our dedicated and passionate staff who have enthusiastically partnered with our committed stakeholders, providers and community to answer and respond to the question - how can we achieve Gippsland PHN’s vision of “a measurably healthier Gippsland”.

The new Strategic Plan 2023-2025 heralds a sharpened focus on outcomes that matter to achieve the quintuple aim of a more cost-effective system, which delivers a better patient and provider experience, and improved population health, in a way that advances equity for all.



Amanda Proposch CEO Gippsland PHN



PROGRESS OUR PRIORITY ISSUES





Prevention

Better health
services

Main health
issues

Supporting
people

Boosting cancer screening rates

Gippsland Primary Health Network partnered with 19 local general practices to boost screening rates for bowel, breast and cervical cancer, and testing for hepatitis B and C.

A report by the University of Melbourne, prepared for the Victoria Department of Health, showed the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed patients' screening and diagnostic appointments, contributing to a 30 per cent reduction in cancer notifications since restrictions were applied in Victoria in 2020.

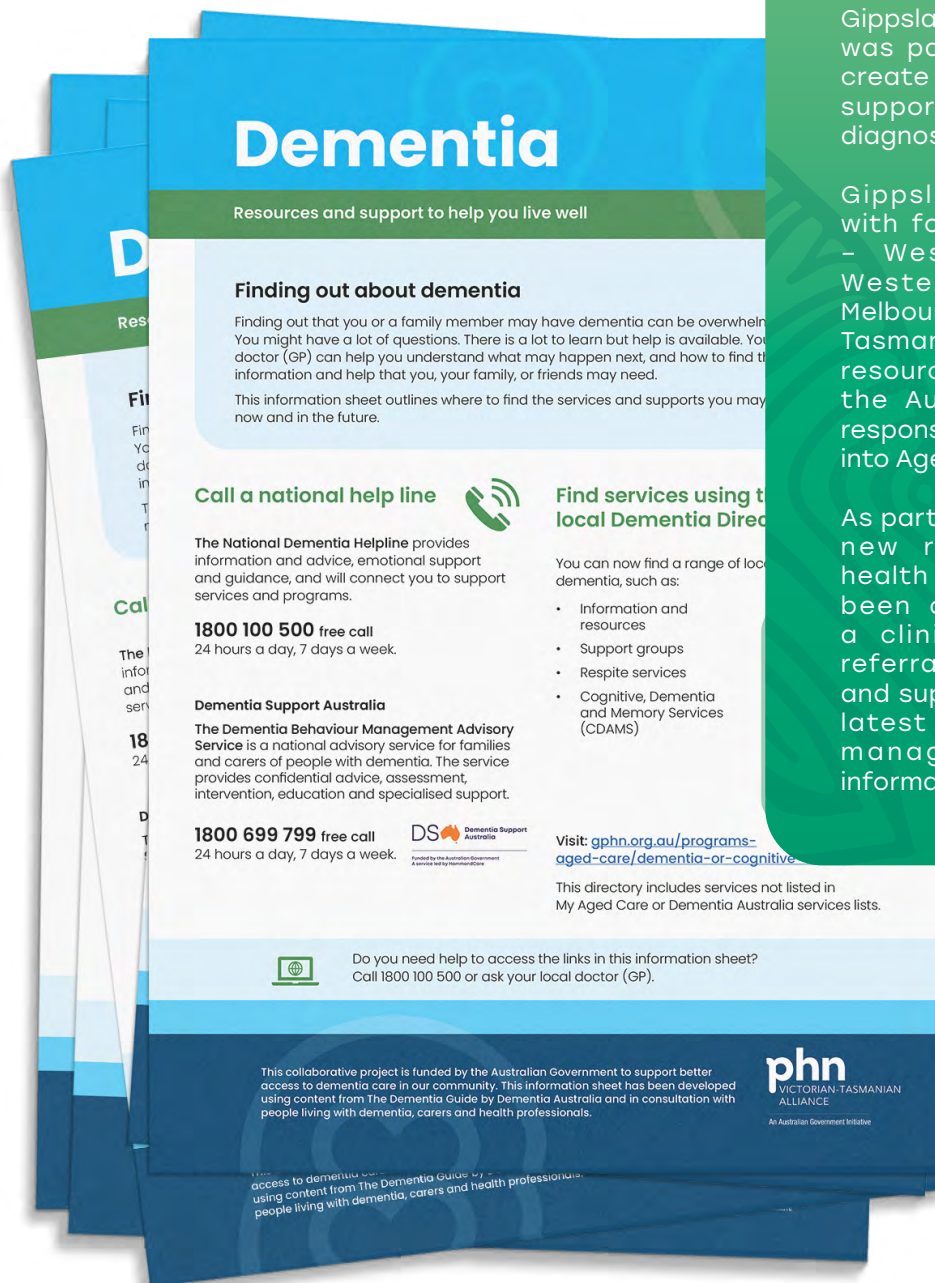
These decreases had significant public health implications for vulnerable population groups and the general community.

Throughout the Maximising Cancer Screening project, practices chose one of the focal cancer screening types and were supported by Gippsland PHN to embed screening activities in their general practice.

These activities included extracting clinic data to identify patients who are under screened or have never been screened, facilitated learning workshops and opportunities to share, network and connect with other practices involved in the project.



New resources support people with dementia



Gippsland Primary Health Network was part of a collaboration to create resources designed to support people who have been diagnosed with dementia.

Gippsland PHN collaborated with four other Victorian PHNs – Western Victoria, North Western Melbourne, Eastern Melbourne, and Murray – and the Tasmanian PHN, to develop the resources that were funded by the Australian Government in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

As part of the PHN collaboration, new resources to support health professionals have also been created. These include a clinical management and referral resource used by GPs and supported by PHNs, with the latest dementia assessment, management and referral information.

Improving end of life care

Ten Residential Aged Care Facilities in Gippsland have access to an Imprest System to improve end of life care with timely medications, thanks to a grant program that is part of the Australian Government's Greater Choices for At Home Palliative Care measure to improve palliative care coordination in a person's home or in aged care facilities.

An Imprest System allows registered health practitioners to access prescription medications including those used for people receiving palliative care. Medications are supplied to an aged care facility as "ward stock" rather than for a specific resident. They include antibiotics, pain relief and other medications.

Many aged care facilities in Gippsland are already using the system. This Gippsland PHN initiative has boosted the numbers to 94% to have an end of life medication system on site.

The Gippsland Palliative Care Consortium has provided guidance and support to RACFs in meeting the regulatory processes required in establishing and implementing an Imprest System. It is also providing education and support to registered nurses in facilities who will be accessing end of life medications via the Imprest System.



Mental health services informed by best practice

Gippsland Primary Health Network funded 11 organisations to deliver Primary Mental Health Care and Psychosocial Support services across Gippsland in July 2022.

The new contracts were the first to be rolled out as part of Gippsland PHN's new outcomes-focused commissioning approach.

Gippsland PHN's aim is for the process to be informed by best practice and through consultation with people who have lived experience. Importantly, the change was informed by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.



Program helping students transition back into life post COVID-19

After experiencing significant mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, many young people in the Latrobe Valley and West Gippsland are transitioning back into life thanks to mental health support in their schools.

The Enhancing Mental Health Support in Schools, delivered by headspace Morwell to provide mental health services to students enrolled in Victorian government secondary schools, has supported young people to re-engage in work and study, increase their social supports, and provided strategies to cope with distress and transition back into life post-COVID.

A provisional psychologist attends seven government secondary schools across West Gippsland and Latrobe Valley on a fortnightly basis.

According to a recent headspace National survey, approximately three-quarters (74%) of young people surveyed reported their mental health had worsened since the outbreak of COVID-19. The pandemic also saw increased withdrawal from work and education, higher unemployment rates, decreased social connectedness, and higher level of psychological distress among young people.



Since October 2022, EMHSS has seen positive change including:

- Timely and accessible support to young people presenting with a range of mental health issues;
- Enhanced mental health support in regional and remote schools where resources and funding may be lacking; and
- Stronger partnerships with schools and the wider community to increase access to mental health services.

Supporting student wellbeing

Traralgon Secondary College sees the Enhancing Mental Health Support in Schools program as an extension of its existing Wellbeing Team. The EMHSS works alongside the college's Wellbeing Team with the focus on providing positive outcomes for students.

The psychologist's expertise is focused on supporting some of the more vulnerable students who would otherwise not have access to a mental health service, such as LGBTIQ+ students or others dealing with mental health issues associated with adolescence.

At Lowanna College in Moe, the EMHSS program has enabled the school to provide more timely access and support for students. With a noticeable increase in mental health issues since the pandemic, the program has assisted the school to be proactive in engaging young people in the early stages of their mental health challenges.

Because the service is fully funded, it alleviates any financial pressure on families and ensures students are not on long waiting lists for other services and can be supported in a safe space they know well.

Funding for services in bushfire-affected regions

Mental health services will continue in bushfire-affected communities with East Gippsland Shire Council securing \$1.335 million in funding under a Resilience and Recovery Program 2022 grant.

This has enabled Gippsland PHN to extend trauma counselling through Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) as well as a social-outreach program to be delivered by the RFDS for bushfire-affected communities.

According to the two services, the key to the success of supporting the East Gippsland community is the successful partnership, resulting in a collaboration of referrals, a broad coverage to the region, shared supervision, one referral point for numerous counselling team members and therefore a quick response.

One clinician said: "The program has allowed me to provide support to a large number of children in rural areas.

"Many of these children were directly affected by the bushfires; many had ongoing anxiety and concerns as a result of the fires. The program has allowed me to connect with these children and create positive support experiences for them where they would otherwise have to travel over an hour for service engagement, leading many to missing out on receiving therapeutic interventions. Making positive connections with young children resistant to support is always a positive experience."



Mental health support making a difference in aged care

Life in a Residential Aged Care Facility was going well for Nelly then it all changed with a fall 18 months ago.

The 93-year-old needed assistance getting into a wheelchair and help to leave her room. Not wanting to be a burden on staff or her son who visited regularly, she stayed in her room more and more.

Then Nelly joined the Mental Health in Aged Care program, commissioned by Gippsland PHN and delivered by Wellways. The program supports residents living in or transitioning to residential aged care.

With support from a Wellways wellbeing worker, Nelly gradually overcame her fear of being a burden on everyone. She was encouraged to go for short walks in the garden and now goes outside regularly with facility staff and her son.



Nelly recently joined the lifestyle program where she enjoys activities with other residents and is rebuilding friendships she lost in isolation.

Another resident, Doreen, suffers with social anxiety and depression. She isolates from other residents.

A wellbeing worker started remembrance therapy with Doreen where she was encouraged to talk about her life, especially her husband and three children. The wellbeing worker also assisted Doreen with her anxiety around small tasks like getting her haircut, something she found very difficult.

Both Nelly and Doreen are just two of many Gippsland aged care residents who are discovering the benefits of the Wellways' program.



Project supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic health conditions

The Integrated Team Care (ITC) program is improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic health conditions through better access to coordinated and multidisciplinary care.

Gippsland Primary Health Network supports four Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) to deliver the program:

- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC)
- Ramahyuck
- Moogji Aboriginal Council
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA)

Each of the ACCOs offers the program through the employment of a care coordinator and outreach worker.

During 2022-2023, Moogji Aboriginal Council introduced the innovation of employing a registered nurse in the care coordinator role. Gippsland PHN worked with Moogji to implement a new model to assist with medical specialist and allied health appointments, medical aids and transport to better support health outcomes to ITC clients.

Moogji hit the ground running, and engagement and support of its clients with chronic health conditions increased immediately. The registered nurse from Orbost worked closely with local health services, such as Orbost Regional Health (ORH) and the Koori liaison officer.

Since the change in the service delivery model, there has been a significant increase in support being provided through the program and the innovation demonstrates a great example of service providers and the PHN working closely to improve local health outcomes.

Heartfelt care

A patient who suffered a heart attack has praised the support of Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland through the Integrated Team Care program.

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS) cared for the patient, helping him with education sessions around his health issues. He was also enrolled in cardiac rehabilitation with Gippsland Lakes Complete Health.

The patient's discharge summary involved both BRHS and the Moogji ITC nurse. The nurse visited the patient regularly at home to assist with medication compliance, perform regular checks and importantly to maintain engagement with the rehabilitation. With Moogji's transport support, the client completed all rehab sessions and with significant improvements in his physical health.

Wish granted

A wish to stay at home after a terminal diagnosis was granted to a local client because of the support from the Integrated Team Care (ITC) program at Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC).

Due to the ongoing relationship that was forged with the ITC nurse, when the client diagnosis became terminal, the nurse liaised with the GEGAC palliative care to enable the client to develop a care plan where their wishes were clearly documented.

The client stayed at home to the end of life, surrounded by a large extended family who has been supported since.

Pop-up health checks for chronic disease risk welcomed by community



Gippsland Primary Health Network partnered with Federation University to deliver pop-up health checks at Farm World 2023, Victoria's Premier Agricultural Field Day and Lifestyle Event.

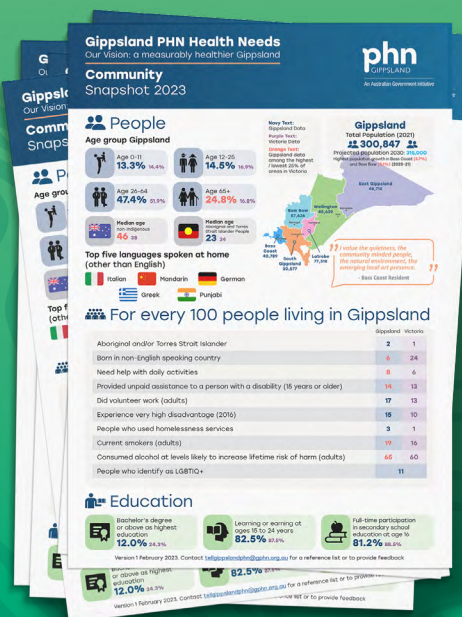
The portable health check clinic offered free, 15-minute health checks by nursing students from Federation University - supervised by a registered nurse.

Eighty health checks were conducted across the three-day event. The nurses identified several very high blood pressure readings, some high blood glucose levels and one irregular pulse. They recommended these people see their local GP or practice nurse for a more comprehensive assessment.

There were also many discussions about changing diets, increasing exercise for weight loss and reducing the risk of diabetes in the future. Some people were so impressed with the assessment they brought family members and friends back for a check-up.

The aim of the initiative was to increase awareness among the community that regular health checks with a doctor or nurse could help identify early signs of illness or disease.

Snapshot of Gippsland communities



Gippsland Primary Health Network is committed to population health planning as an ongoing core function and gathers data and information from many sources, including the local community and health professionals.

A community snapshot was released in March 2023, which identified the health needs across Gippsland. Snapshots were also developed for each of the six Local Government Areas.

Many factors affect health and the community snapshot provides social and health indicators for the region including health, population, employment, education, housing poverty, gambling, crime and access to services with data comparisons between Gippsland and Victoria.

Snapshot data includes:



Gippsland has an older population with **24.8%** aged 65 years or older, compared to **16.8%** across Victoria.



Aged pension (people 65 years and over) – **67.4%** Gippsland **58.1%** Victoria



The **population is increasing rapidly** in Baw Baw and Bass Coast



Gaming machine losses per head (adults) – **\$591** Gippsland **\$553** Victoria



The median age among Indigenous people was **23** years compared to **46 years** for non-Indigenous people



People who travel to work by public transport – **1.5%** Gippsland **12.6%** Victoria



Children in low income or welfare dependent families – **15.4%** Gippsland **9.3%** Victoria



Full-time participation in secondary school education at age 16 – **81.2%** Gippsland **88.5%** Victoria



Adults who report feeling undervalued by society – **12.5%** Gippsland **11%** Victoria



Current smokers (adults per 100 people) – **19** Gippsland **16** Victoria



Children years 5-6 report being bullied – **18.9%** Gippsland **15.9%** Victoria



Consumed alcohol at levels likely to increase lifetime risk of harm (adults per 100 people) – **65** Gippsland **60** Victoria



Adults who had no money to buy food in the past year – **7.9%** Gippsland **5.9%** Victoria

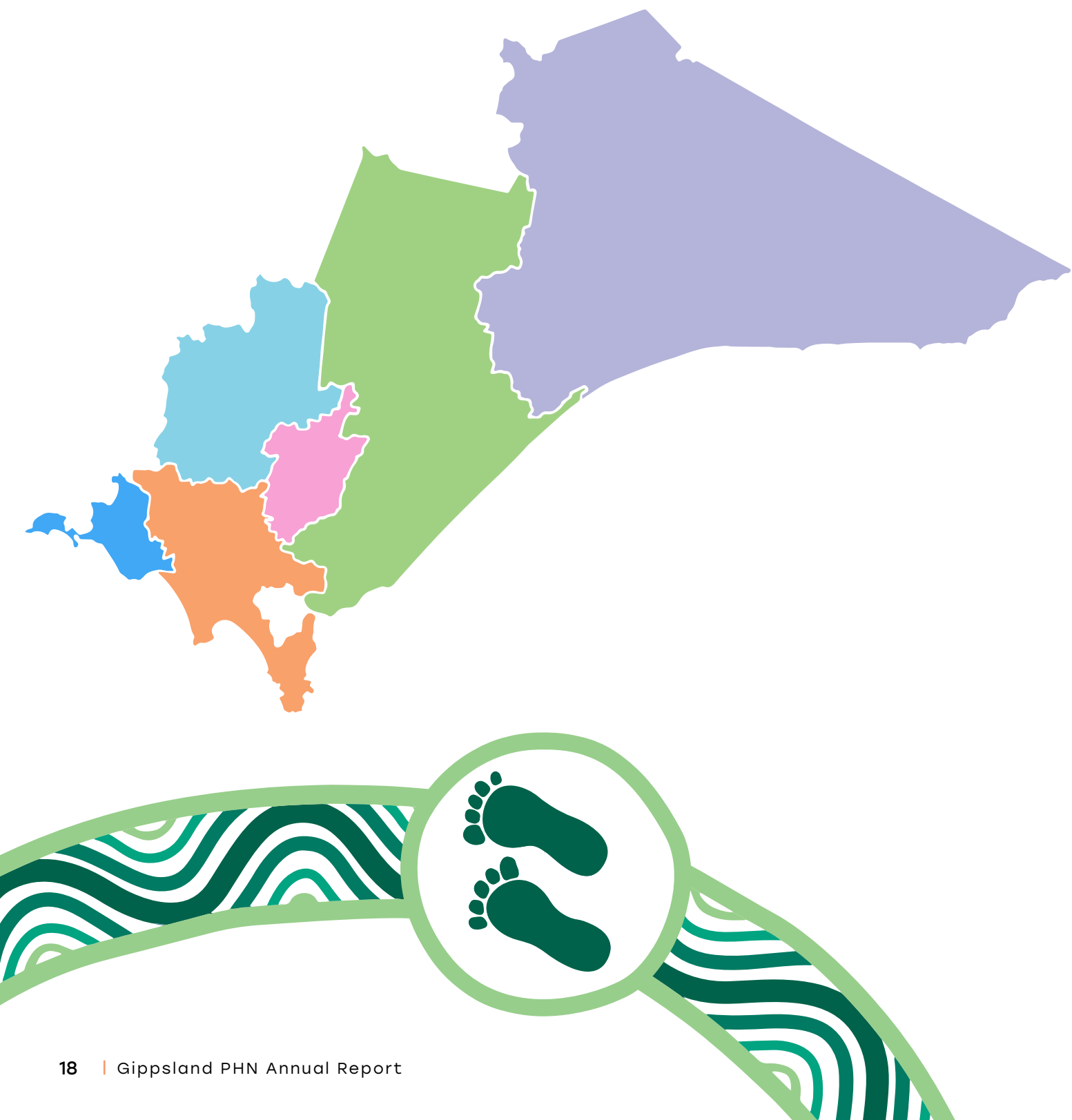


Health and social assistance is the largest employing industry in Gippsland and it has grown from **11.3%** of employment in February 2020 to **16%** in November 2022





In each LGA, the snapshots show high rates:

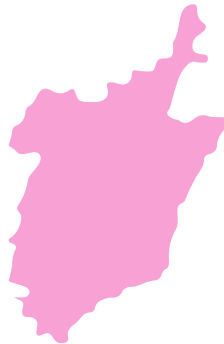


**Key statistics from Gippsland's
six Local Government Areas
demonstrate high rates of:**



Latrobe:

- ambulance attendances for alcohol intoxication
 - family violence
- presentations to hospital emergency departments that could be treated in primary care



Wellington:

- family violence
- avoidable deaths due to cancer and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- presentations to hospital emergency departments that could be treated in primary care



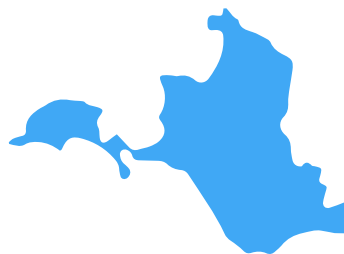
South Gippsland:

- family violence
- people aged 65 years and over
- avoidable cancer and heart related deaths



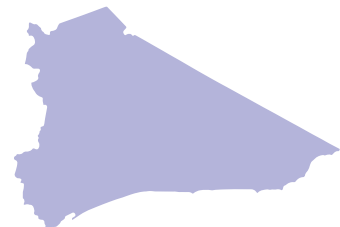
Baw Baw:

- chlamydia notifications
- presentations to hospital emergency departments that could be treated in primary care
- population growth



Bass Coast:

- people consume alcohol at risky levels and high rate of ambulance attendances for alcohol intoxication
 - family violence
- High number of people aged 65 years and over



East Gippsland:

- people consume alcohol at risky levels and high rate of ambulance attendances for alcohol intoxication
 - family violence
- mental health impacts following the 2019-20 bushfires

COMMISSION FOR SERVICE ACCESS





Unprecedented investment in regional aged care



Gippsland Primary Health Network made an unprecedented investment in regional aged care in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in 2022-2023.

The Australian Government provided more than \$7 million in funding to help older people in the Gippsland community seek support across a number of areas. These areas were:



support Residential Aged Care Facilities by increasing their availability and use of telehealth care for aged care residents,



supporting Residential Aged Care Facilities with after-hours supports,



commissioning early intervention initiatives to support healthy ageing and ongoing management of chronic disease conditions and



rolling out a network of care finders to support vulnerable community members to link into essential aged care services





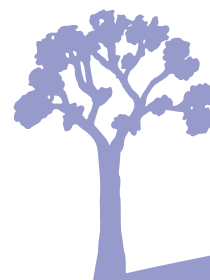
Finding support for vulnerable aged

A network of care finders to provide face-to-face support for people accessing aged care services was established across Gippsland in January 2023.

Care finders assist people who don't have family, friends, a carer, or a representative they are comfortable receiving help from and who is willing and able to help them access aged care services.

Some older people need extra support to navigate the aged care system and access My Aged Care. This could be for a number of reasons including communication and language barriers, difficulty processing information due to cognitive decline or they may be reluctant to engage with support including government services.

Care finder helps people understand and access aged care services and connect with other relevant supports in their community. Since starting with the program, Latrobe Community Health Service and MiCare have undertaken extensive program promotion, supporting more than 105 vulnerable seniors living in the Gippsland community to link in with aged care services.





Early intervention leads to better health



“I’ve really seen a big improvement. I have always kept active, despite my ailments. I want to be independent as long as I can.”

Enid Bowen sits on a chair, lifting weights, rolling a ball with her feet and squeezing a rubber ring between her hands. She laughs and chats as she goes through the fitness routine in her weekly group chair exercise class at HealthLinks Gippsland, looking nowhere near her 94 years.

Enid, who played tennis and did aqua aerobics until she was 83, was referred to the free Healthy Ageing program for Latrobe Valley residents aged 65 and over. Commissioned by Gippsland Primary Health Network, the program is one of a number that supports senior Australians to live at home for as long as possible with the help of early intervention activities and models of care for chronic disease management.

For Enid, the program came at the right time.

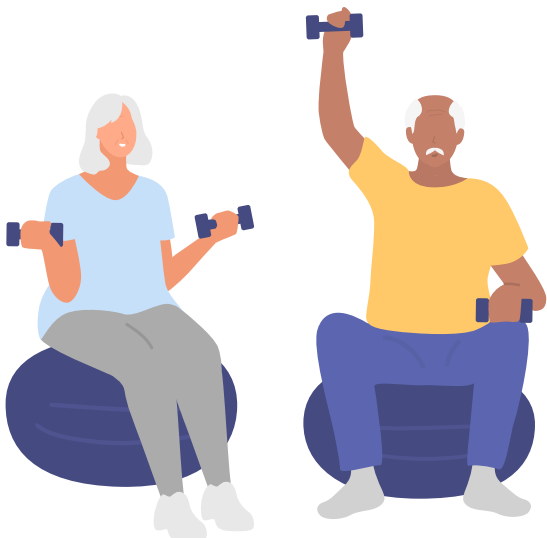
“I’ve really seen a big improvement,” she said. “I have always kept active, despite my ailments. I want to be independent as long as I can.”

Almost 12 months ago, Doug Murray, 79, experienced an unexpected medical issue which left him struggling to walk. With the help of walking aids, he has been attending the Healthy Ageing chair exercise class for six weeks and after a reassessment, will continue for another six weeks.

People can be referred to the free program at the Traralgon clinic by their health practitioner or self-refer. There are two streams available; after an initial assessment, people might have individual treatment with an osteopath or physiotherapist, or for those that don’t need hands on treatment, they can benefit from exercises to improve balance, strength and coordination.

HealthLinks Gippsland Program Coordinator, Kathy Lummis, said sessions were designed to target chronic disease management, minimise deterioration and keep people as active and functional as possible.

“People can come to us with a range of problems including osteoarthritis, neck pain, Parkinson’s Disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and more,” she said. “It is important to recognise when we need support and reach out early. It means better outcomes as it’s easier to fix little problems than a big one.”



Priority Primary Care Centres take the pressure off emergency departments

Gippsland residents seeking urgent medical treatment now have better access to care thanks to the opening of two Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCC) in Latrobe and Baw Baw in early 2023.

The PPCCs were funded by the Victorian Government and commissioned by Primary Health Networks, to ease the pressure on hospital emergency departments by seeing urgent, non-emergency, patients at no cost. There are now 25 PPCCs across Victoria including the two in Gippsland.

Baw Baw PPCC at Central Clinic in Warragul supports the West Gippsland Healthcare Group's emergency department while Latrobe PPCC, operated by Latrobe Community Health Service in Moe, supports Latrobe Regional Hospital.

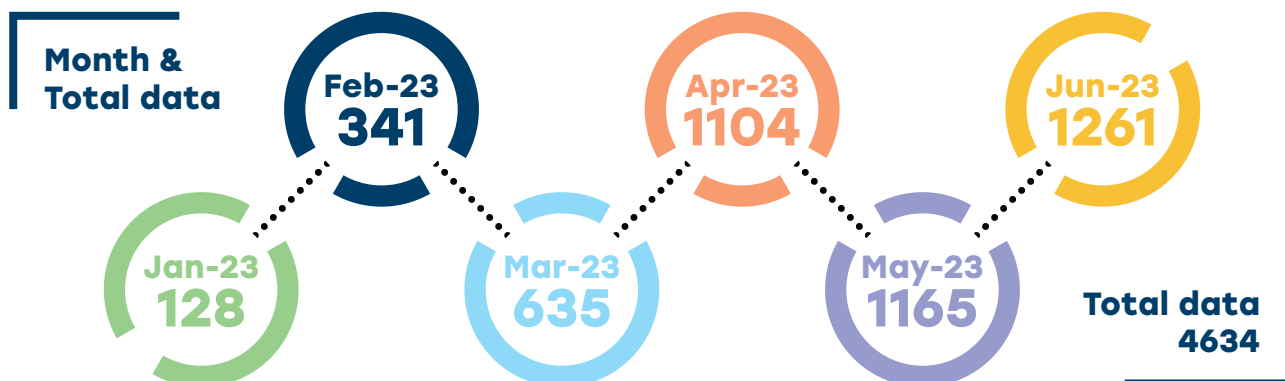
The PPCCs cater for people with urgent conditions that are not an emergency such as mild infections, fractures and burns. A nurse triages patients to the PPCC and once a patient has been treated, they are referred back to their GP who is provided with a discharge summary.

There is no charge for patients visiting a PPCC and patients do not need a Medicare card. Children over the age of three months and adults of all age groups are eligible.

This initiative is a great example of collaboration to provide increased access to urgent care services for the community and at the same time, help reduce the enormous pressure on our emergency departments.



The PPCC was an excellent service with very experienced doctors. All staff were very friendly.



GP commissioned home visits reduces pressure on emergency departments

A program funded by Gippsland Primary Health Network has supported COVID-19 positive patients to be managed at home by health professionals, helping reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments.

General practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) provide home visits to people managing their COVID-19 diagnosis at home who need to be assessed by a GP or a registered nurse. The health care professionals also visit aged care residents being managed in a facility who need assessment and management in relation to COVID-19 or other health conditions while the patient is isolating.

The program's focus is on reducing hospitalisations and allowing people to actively engage in their own health management plan, supported by a health care professional via an in-home visit arrangement.

An important aspect of the program has been Gippsland PHN's use of Capacity Tracker, a cloud-based online tool to support general practices, Residential Aged Care Facilities, pharmacies and ACCOs during emergencies.

Capacity Tracker provides real-time data to help Gippsland PHN identify issues early and assess service capacity within the region.

Gippsland PHN staff monitor Capacity Tracker daily and if an aged care facility or GP clinic has COVID-19 cases, they reach out about the commissioned home visits program for any patients who may need an assessment.

The combination of both programs has resulted in great outcomes for the community.



Great outcomes from GP home visits



Doctors and nurses from 11 general practices across Gippsland have seen 365 patients at home



121 of these have been residents in Residential Aged Care Facilities



Ages range from three months to 103 years old



This program was found to be valuable to our patients when they required assistance during their period of COVID. The funding ensured that extra services were provided to those in need by our practice nurses. This gave patients opportunities to recuperate in their own home without the need of hospitalisation admissions.

– Rosedale Family Medical Clinic



Improved access to digital health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Gippsland Primary Health Network is supporting improved access to digital health technology in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Gippsland.

Four Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations (ACCOs) have been supported to build their digital health capability and facilitate improved access to primary and secondary healthcare.

Funding the ACCOs to purchase these telehealth solutions and strengthen digital health capability, has supported greater access to culturally safe care and wider access to healthcare services.

The equipment provides integrated medical devices such as high-resolution wound cameras that can support a telehealth consultation, revolutionising the way a GP can examine, diagnose, monitor and treat remote patients.

Digital health capacity training was undertaken with staff at the four participating ACCOs – Moogji, Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA), Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC) and Ramahyuck.

Gippsland PHN hopes to increase access to health checks and build the foundations for working with ACCOs to further develop virtual models of healthcare that support the health and wellbeing needs of communities across Gippsland.

Staff praise training

Practice manager at Moogji Aboriginal Health Centre at Orbost, Peter Lisacek, is confident the new technology funded by Gippsland PHN will be embraced by both health practitioners and patients.

Mr Lisacek and practice nurse, Marni Joiner, underwent recent training and were impressed with the range of diagnostic tools available and the ease of use.

“The equipment can undertake a range of diagnostic tests including capturing quality images of the patient if needed, measuring vitals such as blood pressure and blood glucose levels, and even taking an electrocardiogram,” Mr Lisacek said.

“It means if a patient needs further specialist medical support, the doctor can initiate it with the patient from a consulting room at Moogji.”



Practice manager at Moogji Aboriginal Health Centre at Orbost, Peter Lisacek and practice nurse, Marni Joiner, underwent recent digital health training and were impressed with the range of diagnostic tools available and the ease of use.

Head to Health intake and assessment phone service asks the questions

One of the great initiatives to come out of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic was the Head to Health intake and assessment phone service.

Head to Health was originally established by all Victorian Primary Health Networks, including Gippsland, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with Head to Health hubs in Baw Baw and Wellington. The intake and assessment phone service is a first point of contact for people reaching out for mental health support.

This important initiative is delivered in Gippsland by a team of friendly voices at the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO).

In conjunction with the Head to Health hubs, the intake and assessment phone service helps people find the right support at the right time that's right for them. They are a team of mental health professionals who are trained to both support callers by asking them questions about their experiences to assess their needs or to navigate callers to the most appropriate resources and available mental health services in Gippsland.

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, the ACSO team has supported 2,320 callers and made 1,483 referrals to services.

I felt fully supported and was spoken to with concern and respect and all at my own pace. The lady I spoke to on the phone was very understanding and very helpful. I really appreciate the help that was offered to me.

I felt so comfortable and accepted. I am looking forward to my first appointment. I think I will really benefit from this service.

The service was very supportive and explained the process in an easy to understand way when I asked about it.





FACILITATE SEAMLESS CARE





Connecting community to digital health

Neighbourhood houses are considered by many to be the heart of community connection; a one-stop-shop for people seeking support, education, socialisation and much more.

Now, thanks to Gippsland Primary Health Network, they are using digital technology to help people across Gippsland find a range of health-related information.

Gippsland PHN launched the program in council libraries and service centres towards the end of 2021 to help people access their electronic vaccination certificates, book COVID-19 vaccinations and access myGov information. It has since been expanded to support with using the My Health Record mobile applications, *myHealth*.

The program was extended in late 2022 so the community can now get assistance at Latrobe City and South Gippsland Shire services as well as the neighbourhood houses, attracting positive feedback from community.

The outcomes have been positive with people appreciating that personal help in navigating technology to access important health information.

Antonia Halloran-Lavelle oversees 21 neighbourhood houses and learning centres in Central and South Gippsland while her colleague Caroline Lister is responsible for 21 centres in East Gippsland.



According to Ms Halloran-Lavelle, the partnership with Gippsland PHN to deliver the 'Vaccine Helpers' program is a "perfect fit" for neighbourhood houses.

Ms Halloran-Lavelle said neighbourhood houses had changed significantly from when they were first established.

"They are based on the principles of community development and develop their own programs based on community need," she said. "Importantly, the community identifies what those needs are and what resources are required to build and broaden programs.

"During the pandemic and lockdowns, we were forced to close our physical doors but we kept the virtual doors open, helping people who couldn't access medical needs or food. Since then, needs are changing. We now have houses who are teaching people to grow and cook their own food and others supporting isolated people with transport and digital technology."

Ms Halloran-Lavelle sees the partnership with Gippsland PHN as filling another gap in community support. "It is important that houses are a true reflection of what their communities need."



Moe Neighbourhood House Manager, Abbe Moriarty, helps Moe resident, Lawrie Starr, access My Health Record.

Telehealth grants to improve access for aged care

As part of the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) were provided with funding to undertake and commission dedicated activities which support better health, wellbeing and primary care for senior Australians.

Gippsland Primary Health Network offered grants to Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) to improve residents' access to primary care services with most taking up the opportunity.

A number purchased Workstations on Wheels. These are trolleys with a screen monitor, laptop, webcam, speakers and other integrated clinical devices. Others purchased HoloLens - a head-mounted mixed reality device.

Equipment was purchased to support improved connectivity and some small refurbishment undertaken to facilitate private telehealth consultations.



Codesigning a service with our community

Gippsland has a high prevalence of chronic conditions, high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and lower access to allied and other health services when compared to other regions in Victoria.

As a response, Gippsland Primary Health Network undertook work to more fully explore and develop a model for integrated, place-based primary care in rural/remote settings.

Gippsland PHN wanted to understand the range of elements making up a contemporary, safe model of care that can be more accessible, utilise workforce more effectively, be more efficient, and be available to everyone.

The aim was to then trial the delivery of an innovative multi-disciplinary team-based model that:

- meets local community need;
- is underpinned by evidence and the direction of Australian Primary Care reform; and
- is future-focused to address regional access barriers and disparities in health outcomes.

A targeted commissioning strategy was developed which included Market Sounding and Service Design- a process of seeking feedback from community, providers and health professionals.

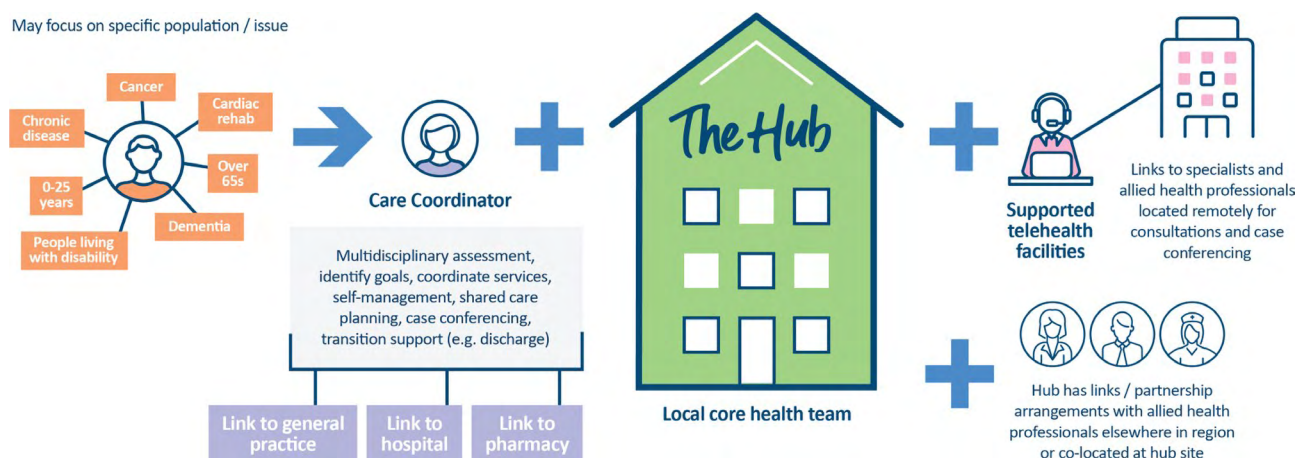
This strategy helped develop market sounding methodologies and approaches that will also underpin future commissioning strategies.

The market sounding resulted in 28 insights, 32 key priorities and the development of "I" statements.

The model of care which was developed as a result of the consultation is a health care hub that provides team-based person centred care, constructed around locally based professionals who work together as regionally collaborative, multidisciplinary teams supported by telehealth where needed.

I want to go to one place to meet as many of my needs as possible and not be sent all over the place

May focus on specific population / issue



The new Community Led Integrated Health Care model.

Program monitors patients in their own home

Gippsland Primary Health Network has been working with general practices across Gippsland to establish the Remote Patient Monitoring program since 2021 with 132 people now being monitored in their own home.

General practices are using the Lifeguard platform, a digital health solution featuring a web portal and mobile app for health providers, and a mobile app for patients. It allows GPs to maintain continuity of care for people and provides real-time data from patients about their health.

Remote Patient Monitoring is used to support patients with chronic health conditions in between visits to their GP to provide additional clinical information that can be used to identify early deterioration.

Patients check in via a mobile app that registers their symptoms and vital signs. General practices then receive this real-time data that helps build a picture of the patient's health over time, which general practitioners can use as part of their consultations to build a fuller picture of a patient's condition and aid clinical decision making.

Patients and GPs are seeing the benefits of remote patient monitoring. Interest among GPs is increasing, reporting they are seeing benefits of lifeguard during on-site consultation with their patients.

They say having patient data easier available in the Patient Reported Outcome Measures dashboard means they can discuss it with their patient and use as part of their ongoing treatment plan.

According to GPs, Remote Patient Monitoring can play huge role in preventing unnecessary hospitalisations and emergency presentations by identifying early signs of deterioration via clinical alerts system.



Free transport service takes the stress out of treatment

The stress on people travelling several hours for medical treatment has been alleviated, thanks to a community transport program operating in Gippsland.

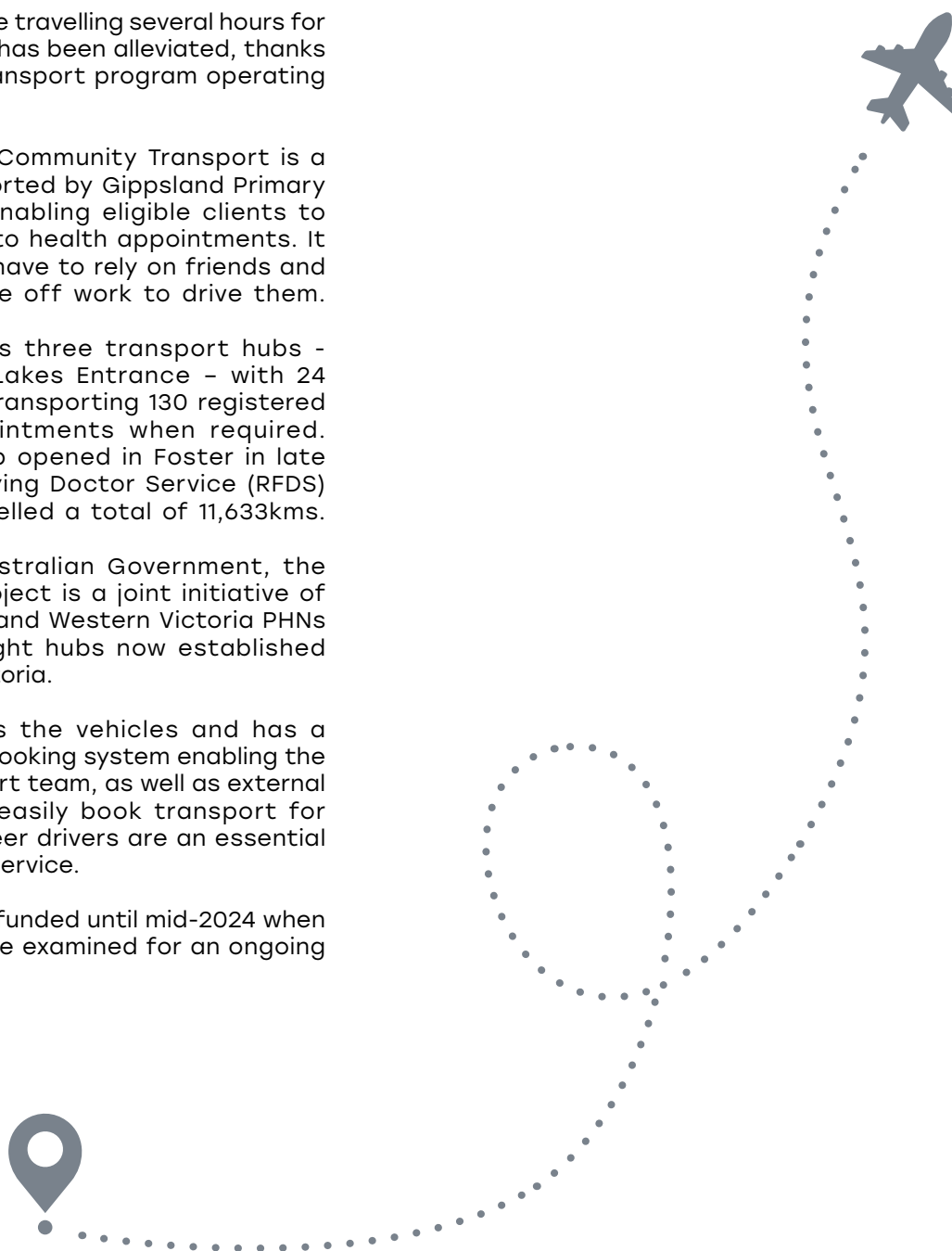
The Flying Doctor Community Transport is a free service, supported by Gippsland Primary Health Network, enabling eligible clients to access transport to health appointments. It means they don't have to rely on friends and family to take time off work to drive them.

Gippsland now has three transport hubs - Foster, Sale and Lakes Entrance - with 24 volunteer drivers transporting 130 registered patients to appointments when required. Since the first hub opened in Foster in late 2022, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) vehicles have travelled a total of 11,633kms.

Funded by the Australian Government, the transport pilot project is a joint initiative of Gippsland, Murray and Western Victoria PHNs with a total of eight hubs now established across regional Victoria.

The RFDS provides the vehicles and has a custom-designed booking system enabling the community transport team, as well as external organisations, to easily book transport for clients. The volunteer drivers are an essential component of the service.

The pilot project is funded until mid-2024 when opportunities will be examined for an ongoing service.





CASE STUDY 1:

A Maffra resident required transport to and from cancer treatment in Traralgon, a 120-kilometre round trip. The client's family had been sharing the driving, forced to take time off work. The volunteer drivers now make sure he attends his appointments on time and without the worry of how he will get there.



CASE STUDY 2:

A Swan Reach resident needing cancer treatment at Traralgon over a two-week period was anxious about how he would get there because his wife doesn't drive. Thanks to the community transport service, they both travelled to and from appointments, reducing their anxiety at a stressful time.



CASE STUDY 3:

A client from Welshpool used the Foster service to attend daily radiation treatment in Traralgon. Without it, his partner would have taken time off work, impacting them financially.



CASE STUDY 4:

After struggling to get to appointments, a client from Foster now uses the transport service three times a week. Because of his regular attendance for treatment, he says his health has improved.

Seamless process for hospital discharge

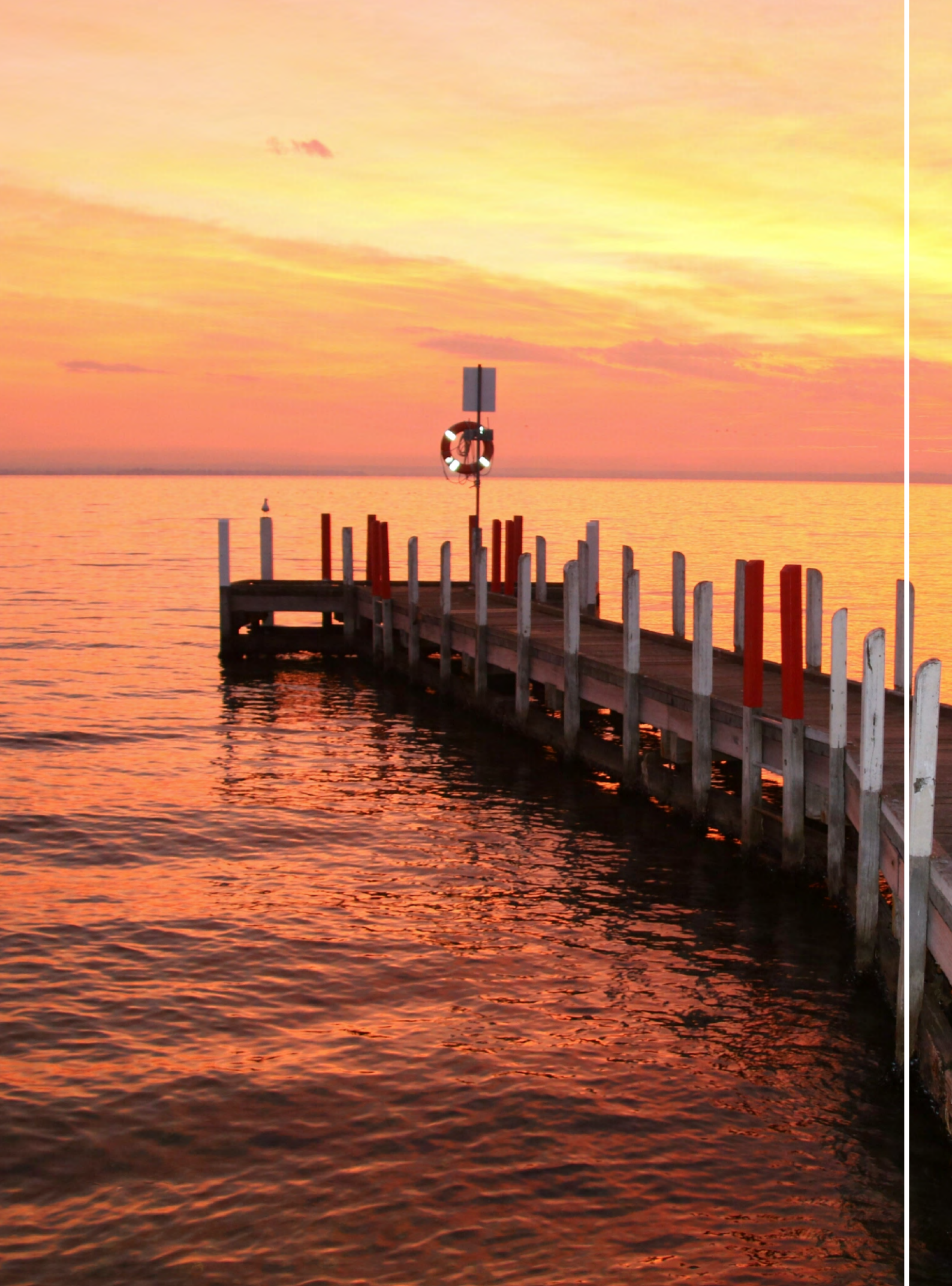
A new project in Gippsland will ultimately make a patient's discharge from hospital to their GP for ongoing care a seamless process.

The project is in response to feedback from doctors and patients. Their concerns included issues with the format of discharge summaries to Gippsland general practices following acute episodes of hospital care.

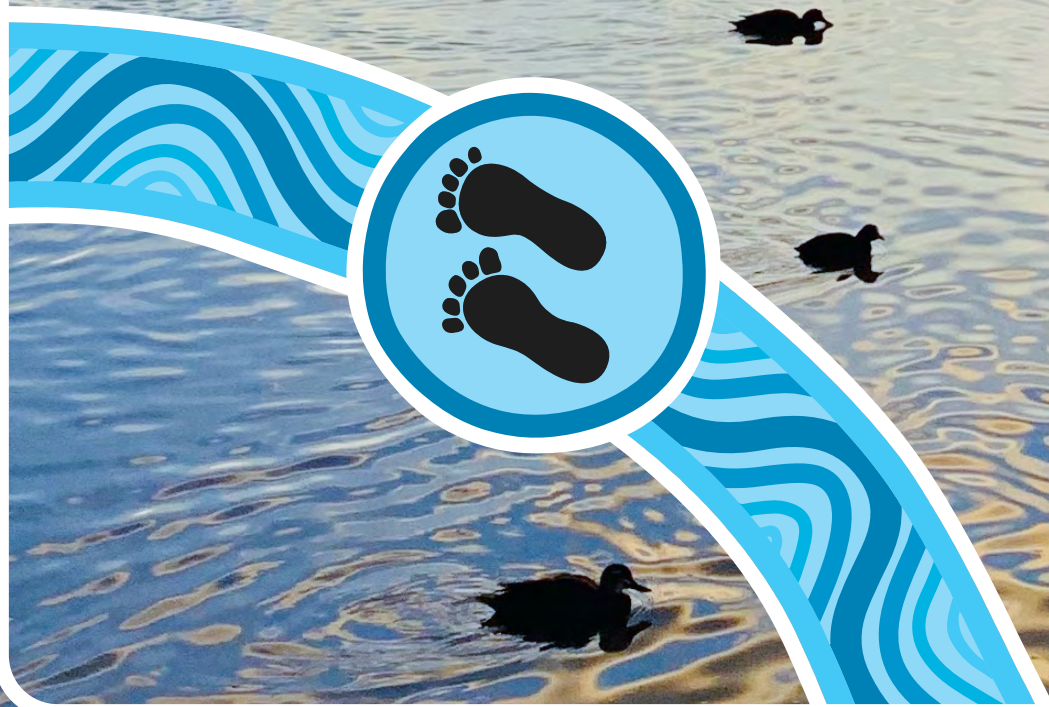
Gippsland Primary Health Network and the Gippsland Health Alliance responded to this feedback with a project to improve the quality of discharge summaries as a tool for handover of care.

Gippsland PHN is funding the Gippsland Health Alliance to undertake the project pilot and to work with a focus group of general practitioners. The key objective is to design a discharge summary format that meets the needs of general practitioners and is fit for purpose as a tool for handing over a patient's care from the hospital to their doctor.





STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE CAPABILITY





**Gippsland Primary Health Network
produced a series of videos to support
general practices and their patients.**

Supporting health professionals and their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients

Why asking the question is important

The under-identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in mainstream health services and national health data sets is a fundamental barrier to achieving health equality for all Australians. The Indigenous population in Australia has historically had, and continues to have, significantly worse health outcomes than the general Australian population.

This video for general practice explains why asking the question is so important.



PHN Gippsland advises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
this video may contain images and voice of people who are deceased.

Gippsland Primary Health Network developed four videos in 2022 to assist health professionals support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

715 Health Check

It's important for general practices to be across the range of referral options to other services that are available for a person after the 715 Health Check and the appropriate MBS item numbers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of all ages can get their free 715 health check at Aboriginal Medical Services and bulk-billing clinics. This health check helps identify whether someone is at risk of illnesses or chronic conditions.

The video from Dr Liz Wearne explained the 715 Health Check.



PHN Gippsland advises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this video may contain images and voice of people who are deceased.

MBS items for treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

In the case of treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, there is a comprehensive list of MBS items commonly used in general practice, as well as items used by other health professionals such as allied health providers and nurse practitioners.

In this video, Dr Liz Wearne explained the appropriate MBS items.



PHN Gippsland advises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
this video may contain images and voice of people who are deceased.

Gippsland Primary Health Network developed four videos in 2022 to assist health professionals support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Integrated Team Care Program

The aim of Integrated Team Care (ITC) is to contribute to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic health conditions through better access to coordinated and multidisciplinary care.

This video explains the program.



PHN Gippsland advises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this video may contain images and voice of people who are deceased.

Strengthening Medicare GP Grants - supporting general practices

Most Gippsland general practices received one-off grants of between \$25,000 and \$50,000 to expand patient access and improve general practice services.

The Australian Government committed \$220 million in funding to general practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to make improvements to support quality primary care as part of its Strengthening Medicare commitment.

The government acknowledged that general practice is the cornerstone of the primary health care system as well as the most accessed care for consumers.

General practitioners are often the first point of contact for patients in the health system, providing primary and preventative care, advice, education and referrals.

The funding could be used to make an investment in innovation, training, equipment, and minor capital works. This includes initiatives to:

- **Enhance digital health capability** – to fast-track the benefits of a more connected healthcare system in readiness to meet future standards;
- **Upgrade infection prevention and control arrangements** – to ensure infectious respiratory disease (e.g. COVID, influenza) patients can be safely seen face-to-face; and/or
- **Maintain and/or achieve accreditation** against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for General Practice, under the General Practice Accreditation Scheme, to promote quality and safety in general practice.



Clocktower Medical Centre Practice Manager, Caroline Driscoll, is pictured in the Sale clinic's new isolation room, ensuring patients with potentially contagious medical conditions are kept separate from other people while they receive medical care.

The new room was built with the clinic's Strengthening Medicare grant.



New workforce dementia training program

A new workforce dementia training program, Demystifying Dementia, has been developed in conjunction with Dementia Training Australia, with the program designed and facilitated by GPs for GPs, GP registrars, practice nurses, nurse practitioners and other health professionals.

This tailored training package, which is delivered by Dementia Training Australia, covers:

- Reframing Dementia – applying GP friendly frameworks to better understand dementia;
- Dementia diagnosis demystified – a stepwise approach to diagnosing dementia in general practice;
- Dementia management demystified – a stepwise approach to initiating the post-diagnostic care of dementia in general practice.



Making eye health a priority for GPs

Gippsland Primary Health Network has partnered with the Victoria Department of Health and Vision 2020 Australia to improve detection of eye disease across Gippsland and increase referrals to optometrists and ophthalmologists.

Gippsland PHN is one of five primary health networks across Victoria to implement the pilot project. Ten Gippsland participating general practices are focusing on embedding eye health preventative care within their practice. The project includes online training modules that cover the latest evidence-based guidelines for eye health care and best practices for identifying patients at risk of eye diseases.

By implementing this pilot project, Gippsland general practices will support early identification of vision loss and eye health disease, through activities focusing on increasing engagement with local optometrists and ophthalmologists, ensuring patients receive the eye health care they need.

Many eye conditions are preventable if detected and treated early. Regular eye examinations can identify avoidable blindness and vision loss. While eye disease can occur at any age, the risk factors include:



being over 40 years of age



smoking



hypertension



diabetes



having a family history of eye disease



Immunisation Endorsement Pathway for aged care nurses

Sixteen registered nurses in Gippsland Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) became qualified nurse immunisers, thanks to grants from Gippsland Primary Health Network.

The program was designed to build a sustainable immuniser workforce in aged care facilities across the region and increase the pool of appropriately qualified immunisation providers to support COVID-19 and influenza vaccination.

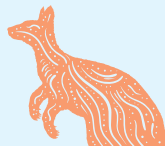
RACFs have many different models to vaccinate their residents and staff which include in-house vaccination or bringing in an outside provider. The upskilling of RACF nurses helps facilitate long-term immunisation capacity and frees up the medical workforce currently required for supervision.

Sue Bailey, a registered nurse at Rose Lodge Community Aged Care in Wonthaggi, said the course gave her a better understanding of the vaccines older people need and also the possible risk of anaphylaxis.

“While I administer COVID and flu vaccines, I learnt much more about the importance of immunising the elderly against meningococcal, shingles and the different strains of flu,” Sue said. “It was a really good course and I’m so glad I did it.”



Cultural awareness training



Gippsland Primary Health Network delivered cultural awareness training for primary healthcare staff throughout Gippsland.

Cultural Awareness training provides service providers with knowledge of the history and culture of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people/s.

It helps them understand the challenges and barriers to adequate health care faced in local communities and also how to make their practices 'Culturally Safe'. They learn how to engage appropriately with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and understand practices that make community members feel safe to identify and engage with care/treatment with the service provider.



Sharing cultural barriers and histories of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/s



Creating an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people/s



Shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge

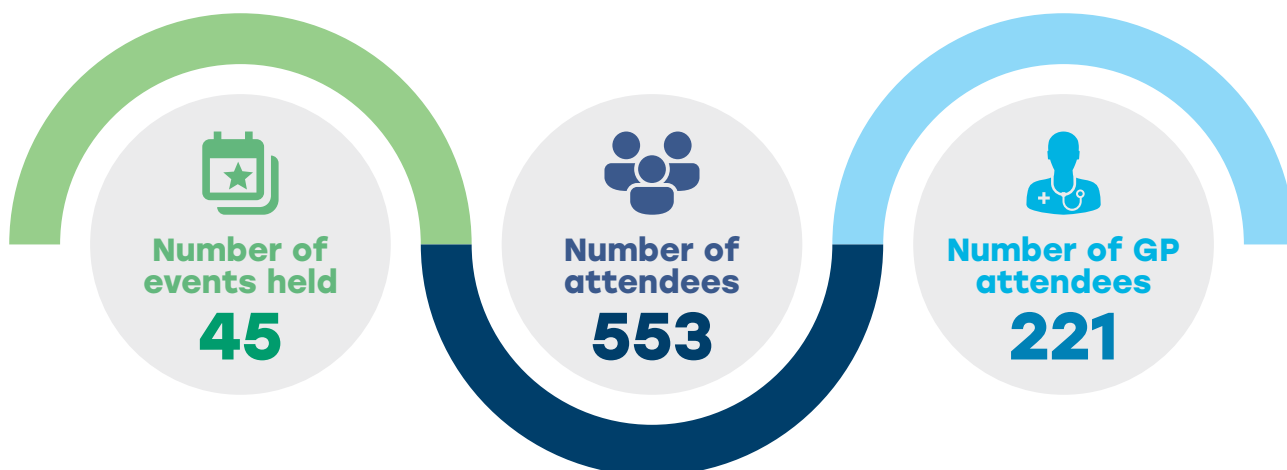


Ensuring all workers/ staff, consumers and visitors feel comfortable, supported and respected in a workplace



Cape Paterson provided a picturesque backdrop for the training and smoking ceremony at the most recent Cultural Awareness training, followed by a face-to-face session, providing participants with an understanding of Indigenous culture to deliver culturally competent services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Professional development and education provided by Gippsland PHN



Partner organisations:



Most popular events



Project to address primary care workforce planning

Gippsland Primary Health Network has embarked on a project to address workforce planning and prioritisation in the primary healthcare sector.

There are numerous complex challenges that impact on rural and regional GP workforce, as published in the Gippsland PHN Priority Issues Paper in December 2022.

A national survey of general practitioners in 2022 found that seven in 10 practice owners were worried about the short or long-term viability of their business as they struggled to find and retain doctors, 40 per cent of GPs are aged 55 or older with one in four GPs planning to retire within the next five years.

Additionally, 13.8 per cent of medical students are choosing to become GPs, down from 16.1 per cent last year.

The transition to the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program in February 2023 from Regional Training Organisations (RTOs) to GP colleges - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RCGPA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACCRM) was the instigation for the AGPT Workforce Planning and Prioritisation (WPP) project.

It is aimed at supporting the transition to college-led general practice training, through the provision of planning and prioritisation advice on GP training placements to meet current and future GP workforce needs.

Gippsland PHN, along with five other PHNs across Victoria including Eastern Melbourne PHN, Murray PHN (lead agency), North Western Melbourne PHN, South Eastern Melbourne PHN and Western Victoria PHN represent Victoria for the WPP project and are responsible for delivering a robust, independent, evidence-based advice to the Australian Government's Department of Health and contribute to the AGPT Program training placement decisions.

The six Victorian PHNs have worked in partnership to present individual data and submitted a preliminary report, which included early suggestions of priority locations. Together, the Victorian PHNs will continue to improve these methods and reporting to maximise the potential outcome of this project.

The main factors for GPs staying in their current practice often relates to personal or family life, including social connections, recreation, schools and childcare, reduced workload, increased support for credentialing and other career opportunities.

The most encouraging retention factors for Gippsland health workers were supportive well-functioning practice, nature of work, ties to the area, and positive workplace culture. Alternatively, workplace issues, staffing and skill shortages, and temporary accommodation were commonly cited discouraging retention factors.

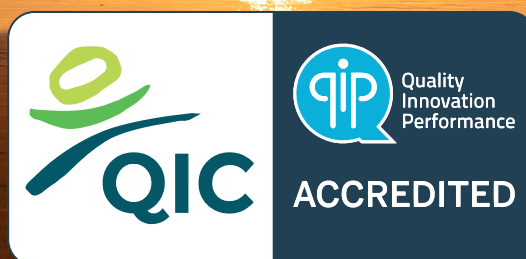
The WPP project will allow Gippsland PHN to talk to local stakeholders about some of these challenges and possible solutions to inform capacity building of GP training across Gippsland.





EXCEPTIONAL ORGANISATION





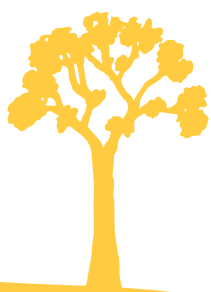
Grant to address primary healthcare service issues

Gippsland Primary Health Network received an Australian Government grant in September 2022 under the Primary Care Rural Innovative Multidisciplinary Models funding round.

The grant will be used to work with the community and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate the previous design work in developing community-led multidisciplinary models of care.

The project will also explore the challenges of health workforce shortages and maldistribution in rural and remote Australia to improve access, enhance service delivery and availability of local health services. This project aims to build resources to plan effective and sustainable community led models of care.

The project will run until June 2024 and Gippsland PHN will share findings and lessons learned from the design and co-design process with other rural and remote communities across Australia, empowering them to design their own primary healthcare solutions.



Mitigating the negative health impacts of climate change

Gippsland Primary Health Network will work with the regional primary health care sector to help mitigate the negative health impacts of climate change and support greenhouse gases reduction to improve health outcomes.

The organisation has developed a position statement on climate change as well as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and associated action plan. The action followed a recommendation from Gippsland PHN's Community Advisory Committee. The committee raised the connection between climate change and health, and the importance for Gippsland PHN to have a leadership role in adaptation of mitigation initiatives.

According to the World Health Organisation, health care contributes more than 4.4% of net global climate emissions, which is equivalent to 514 coal-fired power plants.

Gippsland PHN undertook emission audits of its three Gippsland offices – Traralgon, Wonthaggi and Bairnsdale.

It also offered an emissions reduction grant to Gippsland general practices to cover the cost of an emission audit to identify areas where their carbon footprint could be reduced.



Gippsland PHN has reduced its carbon footprint by partnering with DocuSign in 2022 to issue contracts electronically via a secure link and eliminating the need for paper documents. Along with in-house productivity savings, the initiative has seen:

- **2.2 tonnes of carbon emissions reduced**
- **23,170 litres of water conserved**
- **943 kg of wood saved**
- **152 kg of waste eliminated**

This equates to saving 15,312 pages of paper or conserving six trees.



Medical practice going greener

Maffra Medical Centre is looking forward to making its practice more energy efficient after receiving its energy assessment report as part of a Gippsland PHN grants initiative.

Practice Business Manager at Maffra Medical Centre, Kylie Nair, said the practice was committed to reducing its carbon footprint and had been investigating initiatives over the last few years.

“The grant opportunity came at a great time as the centre is committed to ‘going greener’ because of the broader impact on the health of our environment and our community,” Kylie said. “Our practice partners have all had personal energy audits undertaken at their homes and were keen to have an assessment done of their practice.”

Gippsland students encouraged to take a local healthcare career



Delivered by the Latrobe and Baw Baw Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), Gippsland Primary Health Network supported a two-day event which included a taste of university life, and tours of hospitals and clinics, for more than 70 secondary school students from across the region.

The Health Camp encouraged these students to explore different career options and pathways in the local health sector.

It is not always easy for students to undertake a work placement in a health setting. The focus of the camp is to strengthen the connection between schools and industry to help students develop a pathway from school into further study or employment. Having a locally grown workforce means that people are more likely to stay in the region.

A highlight of the camp was the Inspiring Health Dinner, where the students heard stories from successful local health professionals about their career journey and met with nurses, paramedics, allied health and other professionals to answer specific questions about their career interests.

Gippsland PHN's Executive Manager Operations attended the event and met students who are aspiring to careers in midwifery and allied health- it was encouraging to hear about their enthusiasm and desire to return and work in their Gippsland community.

The Health Camp is a partnership between the Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN, Federation University and TAFE Gippsland and is sponsored by Latrobe Health Assembly, West Gippsland Healthcare Group, Latrobe Health Services, Latrobe Valley Authority, Gippsland PHN, Monash Rural Health and Rural Workforce Agency Victoria.

Latrobe Regional Hospital, West Gippsland Hospital, Maryvale Private Hospital, Dalkeith Gardens Aged Care, Heritage Manor Aged Care, Fairview Village Aged Care and Ambulance Victoria hosted students as part of the industry visits.

Standing on a Moving Deck – theme for annual staff survey

The theme for the annual Gippsland Primary Health Network Staff Benchmarking Survey was 'Standing on a Moving Deck' with a focus on our adaptive culture, resilience and leadership during turbulent times. Conducted in February 2023 and administered by Best Practice Australia (BPA), 94 per cent of staff participated.

Gippsland PHN aligns to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Framework, embedding a systems approach to culture, continuous improvement, problem solving and employee engagement for Improving Joy in Work.

This year's survey results included:

Gippsland PHN maintained our Culture of Success with an engagement score of 79% - the second-best engagement score that we have ever achieved.

84% of staff believe that Gippsland PHN is truly a great place to work, against a Benchmarking Norm of 69%, indicating the top three reasons as Our Positive Culture, Our Colleagues and Our Supports.

Gippsland PHN achieved a net promotor score of 67% - our best yet.

Gippsland PHN reached higher than the benchmarking norms in all questions on forward momentum and trusting and respecting each other.



Reconciliation Action Plan – a process of deep reflection

Gippsland Primary Health Network's vision for reconciliation is to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights to equity of access to culturally safe and inclusive primary health care in Gippsland.

This vision was the driving force behind the organisation undertaking the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan, launched in April 2023.

Gippsland PHN was guided through a process of deep reflection on how it could contribute to the progress of reconciliation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, how it could partner with the community to be part of the solution and how relationships sit at the heart of this process.

During the RAP development process, the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Manager Operations met with a number of stakeholders in the region in order to listen and to seek to understand how Gippsland PHN could authentically engage and work together to strengthen existing relationships or forge new and emerging connections.

A RAP Working Group, comprising Gippsland PHN staff and representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, guided the development and implementation of actions in the RAP.

Aboriginal Consultant, Brian Stevens, a proud Gunaikurnai man and Founder and Director of Wariga Molla Consulting, was engaged to facilitate and lead the RAP Working Group. He provided deep cultural guidance and insights to ensure Gippsland PHN developed culturally appropriate mechanisms to support the aspirations, ideas and new opportunities identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Gippsland PHN was also privileged to work closely with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) on understanding language and how it represents our vision.

Gippsland PHN acknowledges that it has much work to do to build a robust and sustainable partnership with community and is committed to putting the RAP into action, bringing it to life so that it's more than just words on a page.

It hopes the implementation of the RAP, with and alongside the Gippsland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, will be received as 'deadly' and indeed addresses the gap in healthcare outcomes.

Read the RAP in full at gphn.org.au/about-us/reconciliation-action-plan/

Waru ninbar thoolo njinde

- We sit with you

BEHIND THE ARTWORK - Soaring and Growing in Unity

Gunaikurnai, Gunditjmarra and Bidjil man, Bradley Brown, created the artwork for Gippsland PHN's Reconciliation Action Plan, focusing on the importance of unity for all of Australia and to have respect for the First Nations people.

The artwork speaks on the coming together as the gum tree in the middle represents growing as one. The artwork is symbolic of the Gunaikurnai nation and landscape, with the five gum tree flowers representing the five tribes and people/families within the Gunaikurnai area.

Our pictures below show Aunty Christine Johnson who performed the Welcome to Country, Tre Moffat who carried out the Smoking Ceremony and Gippsland PHN Chair Therese Tierney as well as Gippsland PHN staff and guests.



Gippsland Primary Health Network launched its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with a “Thank You” event on 19 April 2023 for all those who had helped in its development.

Aunty Christine Johnson, Gunaikurnai and Monaro Ngarigo elder, gave a Welcome to Country and Gunaikurnai man, Tre Moffat, performed the Smoking Ceremony before Gippsland PHN Chair, Therese Tierney, thanked the many people and organisations involved.



Kutchu receives a standing ovation

Keynote speaker at Gippsland Primary Health Network's annual general meeting on 16 November 2022 was song man Kutchu Edwards, a proud Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Nari Nari man, strong advocate for Aboriginal people and dedicated to the continuum of his traditional Songline.

Kutchu received a standing ovation following his moving conversation about his life, taken from his parents as a very young child for "no reason other than his colour". After six years, he was finally reunited with his family who were living in Traralgon, starting school at Traralgon Technical School where he knew no-one and playing football with Gormandale.

It was in those early formative years that Kutchu started expressing his feelings and "dreaming" through words and poems which in later life became his songs.

Kutchu reflected that while the "gap" for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was still wide, especially in health, the fact that he was asked to speak to a leading health organisation showed a willingness to listen and have the courage to have those difficult and necessary conversations.

As a multi award winning singer/songwriter, Kutchu said that music chose him and he used music to create connections across cultures, generations and spaces. With recognition of the "true Aboriginal history", there could be hope of reconciliation, he said.

The annual general meeting opened with a Welcome to Country from Auntie Sandra Patten with a performance from young Aboriginal singers, the Nowa Nowa Sisters (Laurina and Bethany).

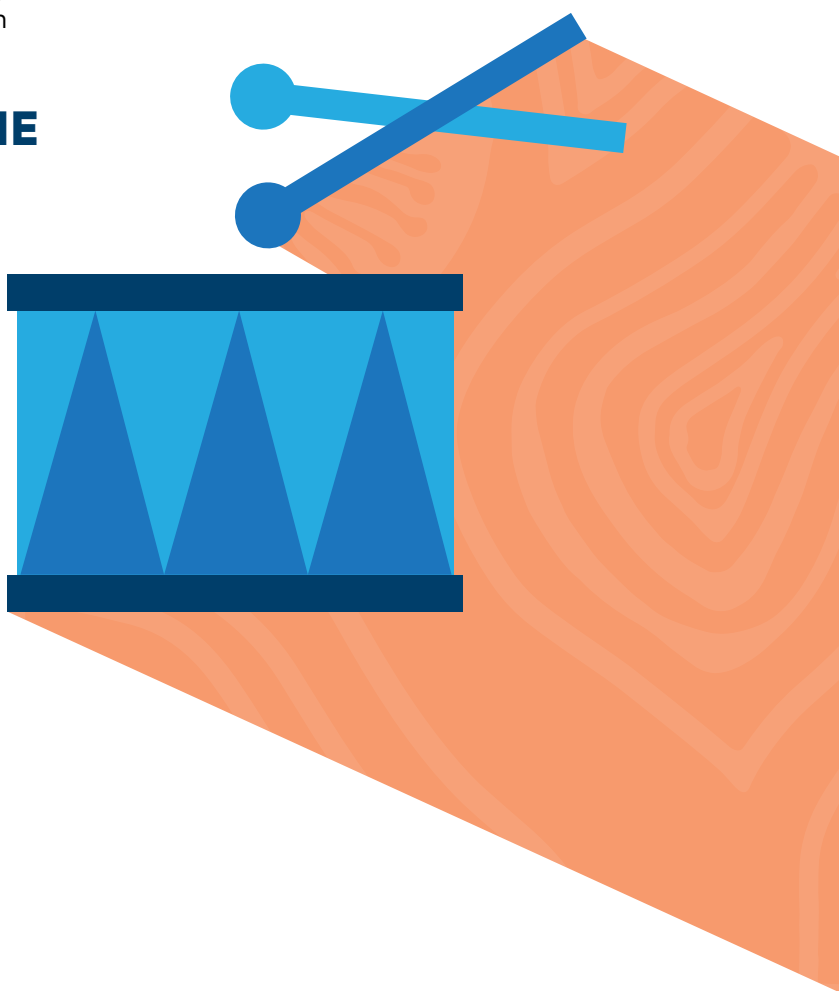


Awards recognise excellence in primary care

Early intervention for young children with development delay, nurse-led screening for cardiovascular health, a program to help ease health workforce issues and mental health support for the homeless.

These varied programs won the four categories in the 2022 Gippsland Primary Health Awards, announced in front of a large crowd at a ceremony that followed the Gippsland Primary Health Network's annual general meeting in Sale on Wednesday 16 November 2022.

FROM 17 FINALISTS, THE WINNERS WERE:



Populations – Central Gippsland Health



The award for Populations is presented to Central Gippsland Health (CGH). Pictured (from left) are Gippsland PHN Chair, Therese Tierney, Melati Conwell from CGH, Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch and special guest, Kutcha Edwards.

Central Gippsland Health implemented a trans-disciplinary model of care through the development of the Early Intervention Triage Clinic. The clinic's focus is on timely support for pre-school children with developmental delay or behavioural concerns.

Health Issues – Latrobe Health Services



The award for Health issues is presented to Latrobe Health Services. Pictured (from left) are Amy Sabatini from Wesfarmers Health, Mark Boyes from Wesfarmers Health, Ian Boyes, LHS Chief Executive officer, Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch and special guest, Kutcha Edwards.

In June 2022, Latrobe Health Services delivered an Australian first-of-its-kind Healthy Hearts Study in Gippsland. It tested the cardiovascular health of 500 people and successfully demonstrated that pharmacy or nurse-led health screenings can be a valuable mechanism for delivering preventative health awareness for the community.

Service Issues – Gippsland Lakes Complete Health

The Cadetship Program at Gippsland Lakes Complete Health represents an innovative solution to rural allied health workforce issues. The cadetship model offers students the opportunity for paid employment while they complete their degree.



The award for Service issues is presented to Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH). Pictured (from left) are Gippsland PHN Chair, Therese Tierney, Anne-Maree Kaser from GLCH, Ainsleigh Whelan from GLCH, Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch and special guest, Kutcha Edwards.

Prevention Issues – Wellways Australia

The Gippsland Psychosocial Support Service is delivered throughout Gippsland by Wellways Australia and in 2021, a position dedicated to supporting participants who were homeless was introduced. Wellways designed a training package for support workers, recognising the inherent link between housing instability and mental health recovery. The worker identifies individuals experiencing homelessness and introduces the activities to support participants in finding and sustaining a home, through a recovery-focused lens.



The award for Prevention issues is presented to Wellways Australia. Pictured (from left) are Gippsland PHN Chair, Therese Tierney with Brendan Beschle, Laura Stavrov and Beth Fogarty from Wellways, and special guest, Kutcha Edwards.

Executive team



Amanda Proposch Chief Executive Officer

Amanda Proposch is a healthcare management professional with 20 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.

Steve Morgan Executive Manager Corporate Services

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.



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 a 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.



Board of Directors



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 metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria and in both the private and public health sectors.

Nathan Voll Deputy Chair (commenced November 2022)

Nathan has served on the Board of Latrobe Health Insurance, West Gippsland Healthcare Group and Latrobe Community Health Service. Nathan has over 20 years' experience in the private and public sector in executive positions, management, consulting and finance/accounting. He is currently the regional finance manager for South Eastern Victoria with the Department of Education and Training.



Julie Rogalsky (Deputy Chair until to November 2022)

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.

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.





Dr Elisabeth Wearne

Elisabeth is a General Practitioner at the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC). She previously spent 12 years training and working at Gippsland Lakes Community Health, providing clinical services to several East Gippsland towns including Aboriginal Health services, Omeo District Health and in youth healthcare provision roles.

Dr Letitia Clark

Letitia is a GP Anaesthetist, the Chief Medical Officer at West Gippsland Healthcare Group, and a fellow of the RACGP. Her clinic work is a combination of hospital anaesthetics and general practice with a focus on providing quality acute care within rural communities.



Ryan Brown

Ryan has served as a director, non-executive director and in general management positions within the non-for-profit, public health and local government sectors for over 20 years. He has a passion for driving change and innovation.

Mary Sayers

Mary is an experienced executive and Board member with a vast array of governance and leadership skills. She is a senior leader in the health, human services and disability spheres, working across policy and research, advocacy and service delivery.



Anna Hall

Anna is an IT Executive and Strategy Consultant offering over 20 years of expertise leading teams through significant industry change. She is highly accomplished in corporate governance, strategy, innovation, design and deployment of new products and technologies.



Anne Peek

Retired November 2022

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.



Alex Aeschlimann

Resigned November 2022

Alex is a passionate Gippslander, with ten years' experience on the board of Gippsland Southern Health Service (GSHS).



Advisory committees

Advisory Group	Name	Position	Status
Community Advisory Committee	Anne Peek	Chair / Board Sponser	until November 2022
	Dr Elisabeth Wearne	Chair / Board Sponser	commenced December 2022
	Alex Aeschlimann	Gippsland PHN Director	until November 2022
	Julie Rogalsky	Gippsland PHN Director	commenced December 2022
	Member		
	Geoff Duffell	Kerri Easton	Sue Kearney
	Bradley Hogan	Catriona Knothe	John Lawrence
	Susan Armstrong	Dianne Goeman	Sue Gaffney
	Pam McGrath	Lisa Simpson	Clare Plozza

Advisory Group	Name	Position	Status
Bass Coast South Gippsland Clinical Council	Dr Jacqueline McDonnell	Chair	until March 2023
	Dr Elisabeth Wearne	Board Sponsor	until December 2022
	Mary Sayers	Board Sponsor	commenced December 2022
	Member		
	Anna Langley	Carlene Hurst	Denise Escreet
	Scott Aitken	Dr Ray Carne (until October 2022)	Kirsten Yates-Matthews (until December 2022)
	Gabi Scott (commenced April 2023)		Michelle Denham (commenced April 2023)

Advisory Group	Name		Position
Latrobe Baw Baw Clinical Council	Dr Mitch Kraan	Chair	
	Dr Letitia Clark	Board Sponsor	
	Member		
	Audra Fenton	Elizabeth Plunkett	Leanne Coupland
	Mark (Daniel) Crowley	Joelene Gathercole	Dr Kathryn Brochie

Advisory Group	Name	Position	Status
Wellington East Gippsland Clinical Council	Dr Patrick Kinsella	Chair	current
	Therese Tierney	Board Sponsor/ Chair of Gippsland PHN Board	until December 2022
	Ryan Brown	Board Sponsor	commenced December 2022
	Member		
	Brendon Moar	Margaret Griffiths	Owen Connolly
	Paula Morgan	Sophie Wilson	Dr Emma Gault
	Sharon Gennings	Lindy Thunder	Hayley Schuback

Financial Report

The 2022-23 financial statements of Gippsland Health Network Limited were prepared by Andrew Frewin Stewart 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				
	2022-23		2021-22	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Income from all sources		38,017,721		31,600,065
Total Expenditure for all programs		37,745,485		31,355,577
Surplus/(Deficit)		272,236		244,488
Total income comprised:				
Government grants	34,595,673		29,946,142	
Other grants	1,446,824		955,362	
Other income	1,975,224		698,561	
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION				
	2022-23		2021-22	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Assets				
Current	17,922,949		17,793,718	
Non-Current	1,414,618	19,337,567	1,028,235	18,821,953
Liabilities				
Current	15,398,454			
Non-Current	1,114,080	16,512,534	711,760	16,269,156
Net Assets		2,825,033		2,552,797
Equity				
Retained Earnings		2,825,033		2,552,797

The detailed 2022-23 audited financial statements for Gippsland Health Network Limited can be found on the Gippsland PHN website at www.gphn.org.au.





An Australian Government Initiative



Our locations

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