

"I feel comfortable and willing to talk to a health organisation- a measure of welcoming."

"I can access safe and supportive environments and connect with others" (affected by bushfires)

"I can access allied health services and specialists and not have to travel so far or wait so long for appointments."

"I want to be an equal partner in treatment decisions."

"...we need more GPs to keep up with demand. It's a 4 to 6 week wait."

"I want non-judgmental services."

"We need to keep telehealth services and electronic scripts for the long term."

"I have regular and affordable access to healthcare... within my local community."

"...we need more home care packages...it would be more effective money wise to keep people at home... with the right support to the carers."

"I am supported to find the right service to meet my needs after seeking help anywhere in the system."

# Gippsland PHN Priorities 2022-25

The Gippsland PHN Health Needs Assessment was updated during 2021.

This included an analysis of the latest data and information.

We heard from people in Gippsland via survey, interviews, workshops and an expert priority setting group to help us identify priority areas.

We will now work with our partners towards our vision of a measurably healthier Gippsland.

## Prevention

- Factors affecting health
- Family violence
- Healthy and safe environment

## Better health services

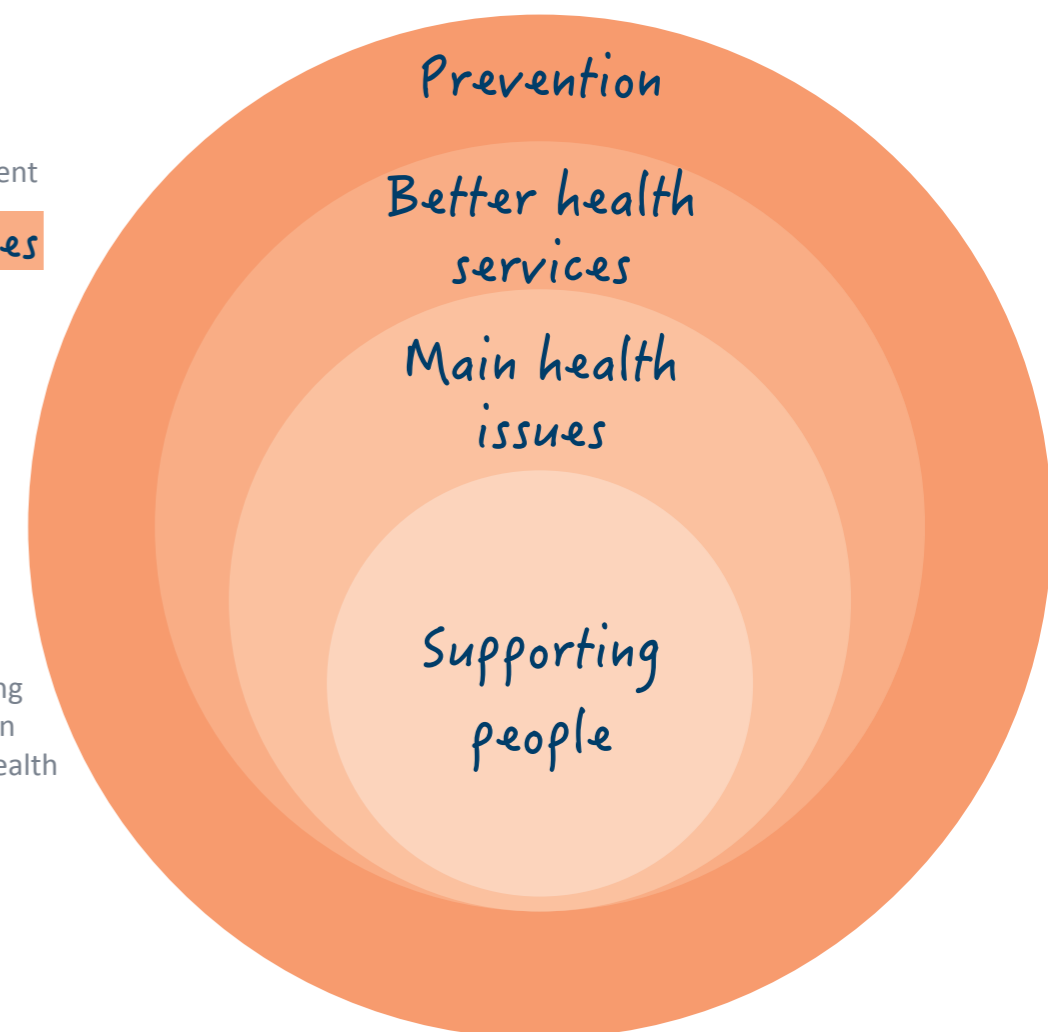
- Access to care that meets people's needs
- Health workforce
- Digital health

## Main health issues

- Alcohol and other drugs
- Cancer
- Chronic disease
- Dementia
- Mental health and wellbeing including suicide prevention
- Reproductive and sexual health

## Supporting people

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing
- Children and young people (0-25 years)
- People aged 65 and over
- People with a disability





## Supporting people



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing**  
Chronic disease management, mental health and socio-economic determinants of health such as employment and housing were identified as key issues for Aboriginal people.

"Being able to access care at local clinic... ability to provide an inclusive and respectful environment."  
[Survey respondent]



**Children and Young people (0-25 years)**  
10.9% children with emotional or behavioural problems at school entry (8.1% in Victoria).

"We need the voice of young people about service access..."  
[Workshop participant]



**People aged 65 and over**  
46% of the activity at Gippsland GP practices in 2019-20 was for people aged 65+. The most common diagnosis was hypertension, affecting 53% of people aged 65+.

"...access for seniors is difficult through My Aged Care. What about those who are not digital savvy or too unwell to use telehealth or the phone."  
[Workshop participant]



**People with a disability**  
The most common active disability diagnosis in general practice was autistic disorder (21.4% of all disability diagnoses), followed by intellectual functioning disability (11.2%) and dementia (9.4%).

"... if it's not physically accessible then the whole thing is useless to me. It all depends on who you are (I have chronic health issues and am a wheelchair user)."  
[Workshop participant]

## Better health services



**Access to care that meets people's needs**  
In 2020-21, 20% of general practice activity was after hours compared to 16.9% in 2019-20.

"If you don't have a service there it doesn't matter if its good or not, it starts with access..."  
[Workshop participant]



**Health workforce**  
Psychologists working in the primary care or community setting across Gippsland has decreased by 15.7 Full Time Equivalents between 2015 and 2019.

"We can keep services going but we have no staff to service them. We also need to support the staff... so overwhelmed, they are stressed out..."  
[Workshop participant]



**Digital Health**  
27% of general practices were enabled to use videocalls for telehealth appointments in 2021, a 50% improvement since 2020.

"I would like more video calls as we are an isolated community. I would like all my records available digitally to any medical person... so everyone is aware or can be aware of past treatment."  
[Survey respondent]

## Prevention



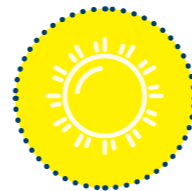
**Factors affecting health (social determinants; housing, income, social connections)**  
20.7% of school leavers participated in higher education in Gippsland (39.3% in Victoria).

"Helping people to improve their lives, access the right supports and involve themselves in community activities."  
[Workshop participant]



**Family violence**  
Gippsland experiences high rates of family violence incidents, including some of the State's highest rates in Latrobe, East Gippsland and Wellington.

"People don't understand what family violence looks like"  
[Workshop participant]



**Healthy and safe environment**  
A total of 1,717 people were seen at Gippsland HeadtoHelp hubs funded in response to the Victorian COVID-19 pandemic between September 2020 and 2021.

"The impacts of climate change are really concerning, climate anxiety, impacts of bushfire, drought, floods, impacts on not just mental health, physical health, increased risk of family violence, AOD use, and we know this will only get more frequent and worse ..."  
[Workshop participant]

## Main health issues



**Mental health and wellbeing including suicide prevention**  
17% of all Gippsland general practice patients had an active mental health diagnosis in 2020-21. The most common mental health diagnoses in general practice were depression (10.9%) and anxiety (7.9%).

"I want holistic care, no wrong door...too many services have exclusion criteria..."  
[Workshop participant]



**Alcohol and other drugs**  
More than 65% of people in Gippsland consumed alcohol at levels likely to increase lifetime risk of harm (>2 standard drinks per day) (59.5% in Victoria).

"Drug and alcohol use can often be people trying to treat their mental health issues... they are just trying to get through their day"  
[Survey respondent]



**Dementia**  
0.5% of all general practice patients had an active dementia diagnosis, increasing by age to 3.1% of patients 75 years or older.

"...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..."  
[Carer of person living with dementia]



**Chronic disease**  
Over 30% of adults in Gippsland report more than one chronic disease, compared to 25.5% in Victoria.

"Early intervention rather than later and addressing the too hard basket rather than ignoring people as is sometimes the case unfortunately"  
[Workshop participant]



**Cancer**  
Cancers rate among the top causes of death in Gippsland with a mortality of 184 per 100,000 people (167 in Australia).

"For my health I would like to be connected to all health professionals, as a centred approach to each person."  
[Survey respondent]



**Sexual and reproductive health**  
The most common reproductive health diagnosis among general practice patients in 2020-21 was oral contraception (9.9% of all reproductive health diagnoses), followed by enlarged prostate (9.2%) and heavy periods (6.8%).

"We need free sexual health checks, more appointments, more specialists in Gippsland."  
[Workshop participant]