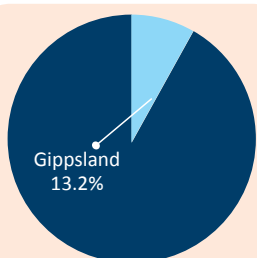


Gippsland Primary Health Workforce

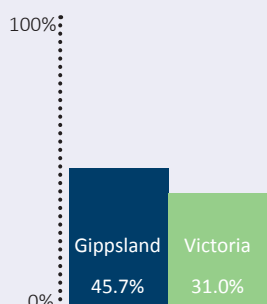
A strong and sustainable primary health workforce is fundamental to improving health outcomes for Gippsland people.

Sustaining an efficient and effective workforce is a significant challenge in rural and remote locations.

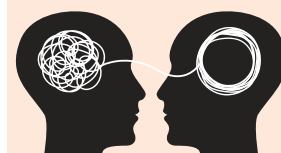
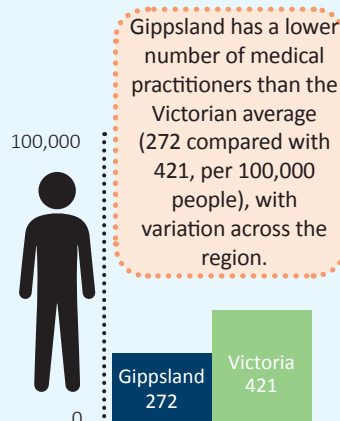
Addressing primary health workforce issues involves a complex system with many stakeholders. How do we best work together to support a multidisciplinary model with a strong role for nurses, allied health professionals and doctors to meet the needs of local communities?



The healthcare and social assistance sector is the largest industry of employment in Gippsland accounting for 13.2% of the total workforce.



A high proportion of the population are not engaged in employment, education or training.



Psychologist numbers in Gippsland are approximately half that of Victoria per population (47 compared with 103 per 100,000 people).

Strategies

The Commonwealth Department of Health's Stronger Rural Health Strategy aims to build a sustainable, high quality health workforce that is distributed across the country according to community need, particularly in rural and remote communities. This strategy includes a range of incentives, targeted funding and bonding arrangements to give doctors more opportunities to train and practice in rural and remote Australia.

National Medical Workforce Strategy Scoping Framework is being developed to provide a guide for medical workforce planning activities at all levels, which match the supply of GPs, non-GP specialists and consultant physicians to the predicted medical service needs of the community.

The role of Gippsland PHN:

- Health Needs Assessment and population health planning resources to inform workforce planning and resource allocation.
- Work with other organisations to develop regional workforce strategies.
- Funding and alternative workforce models.
- Support local education and training opportunities for medical, nursing and allied health.
- Lead or support pilots of alternative workforce models to build the evidence-base.

Attendance

Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) data shows that service provision by general practitioners (GPs) is not evenly distributed across Australia or Gippsland.



5.5

6.3

East Gippsland has an average of 5.5 GP attendances per year (compared to 6.3 in Australia).

The Gippsland community has told us about workforce related challenges including:

- Affordable and timely access to GPs as a top health issue
- Medical specialists and allied health providers are often not local and people need to travel to access them

Medical specialists working in rural and regional areas have high job satisfaction but improving access to professional development and support is important to reflect the need to multi task and assume broader responsibilities.

"Retention of exiting staff is such an important issue that deserves increased focus, both in communities themselves and in the organisations that support health workforce."
[Gippsland health professional]

"Doctors keep changing and you have to keep explaining."
[Gippsland resident]