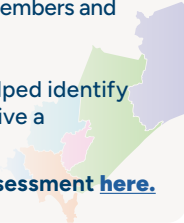


Health Needs in Gippsland - 2024 Snapshot

This snapshot of health needs across Gippsland comes from our conversations and collaborations with community members and professionals throughout 2024.

This valuable input has guided our analysis and helped identify health needs and priority areas, and will help us drive a Measurably Healthier Gippsland.

See the current Gippsland PHN Health Needs Assessment [here](#).



Life expectancy



Gippsland life expectancy was **80.9 years** (83.5 years in Victoria) in 2020-22. This was the second lowest of Victorian regions.



83.2 years for females (85.5 years in Victoria)



78.7 years for males (81.6 years for Victoria)

Australian Priorities:

Aged care



About **1 in 4** people are 65 years or older (1 in 6 in Victoria).

Gippsland has long wait times to access support at home, even after being approved for a support package.

Alcohol and other drugs



Over half of adults in Gippsland drink alcohol at levels likely to cause injury (43% in Victoria).

Problematic drug and alcohol use is often linked to mental health issues and a history of childhood trauma.

Mental health and wellbeing (including suicide prevention)



23% of people in Gippsland were prescribed a mental health related medication in 2021-22 (18% in Victoria).

Men's sheds, neighbourhood houses and other community groups are important contributors to positive mental health.

Health workforce



89% of people in Gippsland saw a GP at least once in 2022-23 (86% across Australia).

Patients notice when healthcare workers are stretched and want to see less overworked and stressed staff who have time to care for them.

Digital Health



Digital inclusion in Gippsland is **lower than the national average** due to poor connectivity and a lack of confidence in using technology.

People want access to community hubs where they can access specialists via telehealth to avoid travel.

Equity of access



7% of people in Gippsland saw a GP after hours in 2022-23 (16% across Australia).

More people in the community don't go to the doctor because it costs too much.

Gippsland local needs:

Arthritis



17% of people in Gippsland were estimated to have arthritis (15% across Australia).

Pain due to arthritis is often ongoing and can limit mobility and quality of life.

Cancer



Avoidable deaths from cancer are **higher** in Gippsland than in Victoria (**34 per 100,000 population** compared to 28).

People in Gippsland who have experienced cancer told us they value specialist care close to home.

Carers



Gippsland has a **high rate** of people providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability (**14% of people 15 years or older** compared to 12% nationally).

Carers often must step in when individuals can't access support due to long waitlists, leading them to neglect their own health.

Children and young people (0-25 years)



15% of children (under 16 years) live in a low income or welfare-dependent family (11% across Victoria).

Young people often struggle to understand the health system and may feel intimidated asking questions during doctor visits.

Health Needs in Gippsland - 2024 Snapshot

Gippsland local needs continued:

Chronic disease (COPD, ongoing heart related issues, diabetes)



High rates of avoidable deaths for ongoing lung issues, heart disease and diabetes, especially among disadvantaged populations.

Having a GP you trust can help identify problems and prevent people from seeking help from multiple doctors.

Chronic pain



19% of people aged 45 or older experienced moderate or severe pain lasting longer than 6 months (based on Australian estimates).

Chronic pain is often poorly managed and overlaps with chronic disease, arthritis, mental health, and sexual health.

Community emergencies



Risk ratings for Gippsland identify areas with a high risk of epidemic/pandemic, bushfires, floods and heat health.

Many people know they must prepare for disasters, as emergency services can't assist everyone immediately.

Dementia



About **7,000 people** in Gippsland live with dementia, which is the second leading cause of death in the region, following coronary heart disease.

The community needs greater awareness of what people living with dementia and their carers need.

Dental



Between a quarter and a third of adults in Gippsland reported having poor or fair dental health; this can lead to preventable hospitalisations.

The high cost and long wait times to access public dental impacts people's wellbeing, employability and more.

Family violence



Gippsland experiences **higher rates** of family violence incidents, including some of Victoria's highest rates in Latrobe, East Gippsland and Wellington.

People facing family violence may stay in a harmful household to avoid homelessness due to a lack of affordable housing.

Homelessness



7,278 people accessed help from homelessness services in 2022-23.

People may feel afraid or ashamed to seek help, but they deserve respectful service and support to improve their circumstances.

LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing



The Gippsland Rainbow Brick Road Report 2023 found that two of three LGBTIQA+ people had **concerns or serious concerns** for their mental health.

Safe options for healthcare in Gippsland are limited for LGBTIQA+ people.

Multicultural health and wellbeing



12.4% of people were born overseas (30.0% in Victoria).

New residents often struggle to understand how the healthcare system works and may also struggle with financial stress, loneliness, stigma and racism.

Neurodivergent health and wellbeing



3,424 people with autism identified based on Gippsland GP data.

There is strong co-morbidity with other health conditions, especially mental health and chronic health conditions.

People with a disability



Gippsland has **higher rates** of people living with a severe or profound disability (**7.8%** compared to 6.1% in Victoria). Many live with multiple health issues.

The service system is confusing, and people often need help to access services and support.

Reproductive and sexual health



Gippsland has **almost twice as many** teenage pregnancies (aged 15 to 19) than the national average (**11.2 per 1000 people** compared to 6.6).

People seeking support to access abortion often experience unnecessary delays and confusion about available options.

Social determinants of health



53% of Gippsland households are classified as 'low income' **which is higher than the Victorian average of 40%**.

Some people in Gippsland struggle to get enough food. A food pantry could reduce their stress and improve mental health.

Person-centered, trauma informed and holistic care is important



People told us they wanted health professionals to listen and show empathy.

A need for trust, connected care and a person-centred approach were key themes that emerged from our community consultation.

Access more Gippsland PHN publications here

