

**22 April 2026**

## **New insights highlight opportunities to strengthen Gippsland's primary health workforce**

Gippsland PHN's latest Health Insights Paper has been released, outlining key challenges faced by the region's primary health care sector and the actions required to meet the increasing needs of the Gippsland community.

*Health Insights – Primary Health Workforce* highlights continuing demand for primary care in the region, with key pressure points driven by an ageing population, rising rates of chronic disease, increasing mental health needs, recruitment and retention challenges, and staff shortages – particularly in mental health, allied health and specialist fields. While Gippsland has relatively strong GP and primary care nursing workforce numbers, demand pressures remain due to the uneven distribution of health professionals across the region and increasing demand for services.

The paper highlights proactive steps required to address these areas, including strategies to attract health professionals to rural communities, strengthening the pipeline for future workforce growth, providing greater support for nurse practitioners and allied health professionals, and expanding the role of community pharmacists. The paper also highlights the importance of multidisciplinary models of care and supporting health professionals to work to their full scope of practice to strengthen the primary care workforce.

### **Key insights:**

- The health care and social assistance sector is the largest employment industry in Gippsland, accounting for 20% of the total workforce in 2025
- Gippsland has fewer allied health professionals compared to Victoria, including occupational therapy (34% less), physiotherapy (42% less), podiatry (38% less) and psychology (58% less)
- In 2023, Gippsland had a higher rate of primary and community nurses per 100,000 population (264) compared to Victoria (231), while there were 51% fewer other medical practitioners per 100,000 population (159) compared to the Victorian average (324)
- Gippsland had a higher number of full-time equivalent (FTE) general practitioners per 100,000 population (123), compared to the Victorian average (117) in 2024

- Despite relatively strong GP and nurse workforce numbers, workforce pressures continue due to the uneven distribution of health professionals across the region and increasing demand for services
- There is a growing number of lived and living experience workers in the region, approximately 70 in 2025

Gippsland PHN delivers a range of initiatives to support the local primary health workforce, including:

- Delivering and promoting training and event opportunities
- Connecting health workers with information about scholarships and professional development opportunities
- Regular engagement with general practices to understand workforce shortages and recruitment challenges
- Collaborating with local service providers and education institutions to identify new opportunities that can be delivered in the region
- Hosting bi-monthly residential aged care community of practice meetings to support aged care workers
- Facilitating projects and initiatives to support health professionals and the community to improve palliative care services
- The provision of scholarships to Federation University Allied Health students to support them to study locally in Gippsland

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said while the region is experiencing growing demand in several areas, the organisation is working with partners across the health system to support workforce development and strengthen primary care across Gippsland.

*“We collaborate with our stakeholders on a range of initiatives to help strengthen the primary care workforce, from proactive workforce planning and scholarship support to innovative care models and targeted education and training pathways,” Ms Proposch said.*

*“A sustainable primary health workforce is not just about increasing numbers. It’s about strengthening multidisciplinary care, expanding scope of practice and supporting team-based models that deliver person-centred care.”*

Gippsland PHN engaged industry stakeholders, health care professionals and the community to develop the paper, combining these insights with local and national data.

The *Health Insights – Primary Health Workforce* paper is available [here](#).

--ENDS--

**Media contact**

**Natalie Kuczer**

Communications Officer

Gippsland PHN

03 5175 5481

[natalie.kuczer@gphn.org.au](mailto:natalie.kuczer@gphn.org.au)