

1 September 2026

Community voices shape new Medicare Mental Health Centre for Sale – community consultation summary released

More than 100 community members, carers, health professionals and service providers have helped shape the future of mental health care in Wellington Shire through a comprehensive consultation and co-design process for the new Medicare Mental Health Centre in Sale.

Led by Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN), the consultation was undertaken throughout July and August 2026 to inform the design and service model of the new centre, which is expected to open in the first half of 2027.

The Medicare Mental Health Centre is funded by the Australian Government and will provide free mental health care and support for people across the Wellington local government area and surrounding communities.

A total of 26 engagement activities were held including community and provider surveys, workshops, community engagement sessions, health professional forums and targeted discussions with priority communities and stakeholders.

The consultation aimed to ensure the centre reflects local needs and addresses barriers to accessing mental health care, particularly for people living in rural and remote communities.

Feedback highlighted a strong support for a service that is welcoming, easy to access and better connected to existing health and community services.

Participants described difficulty navigating the current mental health system, with many reporting challenges associated with referrals, service eligibility requirements and fragmented care pathways.

Five key priorities emerged through the consultation process:

- A warm, welcoming and inclusive environment
- A community-based alternative to emergency department presentations where appropriate
- Improved integration between services to reduce gaps in care
- Greater use of lived and living experience and peer support
- Improved access to psychiatry, prescribing support and medication reviews

The consultation also identified several broader priorities, including easier access and navigation, stronger collaboration between services, outreach to rural communities, culturally safe and inclusive care, and addressing workforce and specialist service shortages.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said the community feedback provides valuable insight into what people want from their local mental health services.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who took the time to share their lived experience, insights and ideas. Their contributions will play a vital role in shaping a service that responds to the needs, expectations and priorities of local communities," said Ms Proposch.

"People told us they want mental health support that is easier to access, better connected and available closer to home. We will carefully consider this feedback as we design a service delivery model that is responsive, community-informed and focused on improving local access to care."

The insights gathered through the consultation will guide the development of the centre's service model alongside program requirements, workforce considerations and funding parameters.

To view the full engagement summary, visit the [Medicare Mental Health Centre Sale project webpage](#).

Gippsland PHN will continue to keep the community informed as planning progresses and will provide updates through the [Medicare Mental Health Centre Sale webpage](#).

Gippsland PHN has released the public tender to commission the new [Medicare Mental Health Centre in Sale](#).

Potential respondents are invited to attend an online tender information session at 2:00pm on Wednesday 9 September 2026. The session will provide an overview of the procurement process, service requirements and tender expectations, with an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

To learn more about submitting a tender and registering for the information session, visit the [Medicare Mental Health Centre in Sale](#) webpage on the Gippsland PHN website.

If you or someone you know needs urgent mental health support, please contact:

- Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours)
- Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 (24 hours)
- Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636

In an emergency, call 000.

To learn more about other mental health services available across Gippsland, visit the [Gippsland PHN website](#).

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