



MEDIA RELEASE

Top issues of concern to Gippsland's young people

10 August 2021

The top three issues of concern for Gippsland's young people in 2020 were coping with stress, body image and mental health.

This was revealed in one of two Priority Issues Papers, released this week by Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN) - 'Young People and Mental Health' and 'Disability'.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said the data showed the issues important to Gippsland's young people and what issues needed to be addressed.

"Information gathered shows that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our young people," Ms Proposch said. "Importantly, the information assists us in setting our priorities for support."

Gippsland PHN currently funds programs to assist the mental health and wellbeing of our younger generation including headspace, Enhanced Mental Health Services in Secondary Schools, Doctors in Secondary Schools and HeadtoHelp.

The Priority Issues Paper showed that according to the 2020 Mission Australia Youth Survey, the top three issues for young people aged 15 to 24 years in Gippsland were coping with stress (55 per cent), body image (52 per cent) and mental health (44 per cent).

It also revealed a total of 22 per cent of Gippsland young people report being bullied compared to the Victorian figure of 18 per cent.

During 2020 and with the impact of COVID-19, it was noted there was an increase of young people aged 12-15 years old accessing Telehealth via Zoom platform.

Headspace waiting lists are managed via a triage and priority method whereby young people remain engaged while waiting for a clinical service. A stable clinical workforce supporting the delivery of youth mental health services remains a challenge, according to the paper.

The Doctors in Secondary Schools program, supported by Gippsland PHN, showed 58.7 per cent of student presentations to a clinic across nine secondary schools in Gippsland were related to mental health issues.



The Priority Issues Paper on Disability shows that in Gippsland, 17,142 people or 6.7 per cent of the population have a severe or profound disability compared to the Australian figure of 5.4 per cent. An estimated 12,478 people have a psychosocial disability and 8,400 people have an intellectual disability.

In other key regional findings, 47 per cent of adults with disability have experienced violence after the age of 15 years, 27,931 people provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability and 8.8 per cent of people aged 16-64 years received a Disability Support Pension compared to Victoria with 4.9 per cent.

The health care needs of people with a disability are often not met. In a Gippsland survey, 44 per cent of people with a disability reported that their health problems had not been well managed compared to 22 per cent of all respondents.

Ms Proposch said the Disability Issues Paper showed that people with a disability in Gippsland identified mental health as the most common co-occurring health issue.

“Social isolation is especially problematic for people with a disability with housing and employment concerns,” she said. “People with disability are also at risk from COVID-19 because of barriers to inclusion and need for ongoing support.

“We commission the Gippsland Psychosocial Support Program for people with a disability and will continue to work with our key stakeholders around disability workforce shortages and the need for increased skills for health staff working with people with disability.”

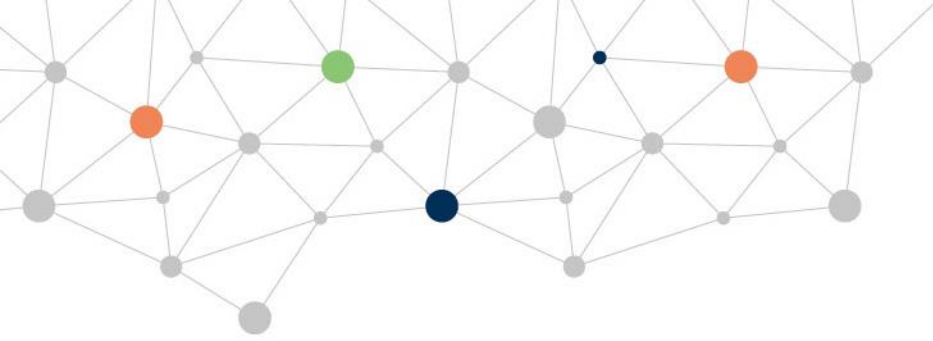
To find out more about these topics, go to the Gippsland PHN website
<https://www.gphn.org.au/populationhealthplanning/resources-2/>

If you or someone you know needs help, contact:

- **Lifeline – 13 11 14**
- **beyondblue Support Service – 1300 224 365**
- **Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467**
- **MensLine – 1300 789 987**
- **Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800**
- **Qlife – 1800 184 527**

To access professional mental health support in Gippsland, speak to your local doctor.

You can also call HeadtoHelp on 1800 595 212 or visit www.headtohelp.org.au



To find your nearest headspace centre, go to <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/>

For more information, contact Lynne Smith on 0437 918 234 or lynne.smith@gphn.org.au