



MEDIA RELEASE

New priority issues papers focus on mental health and wellbeing

30 September 2022

Gippsland Primary Health Network invested \$16.4 million in mental health services across the region in the 2021-2022 financial year with more people than ever before accessing these services.

This was revealed in the two new priority issues papers from Gippsland PHN on mental health and wellbeing (Issues-Impacts and Services-Programs).

The Issues and Impacts paper showed that in 2019-20, there were 2,516 clients accessing Gippsland PHN funded Primary Mental Health (PMC) care services increasing to 4,659 clients in 2020-21. The significant increase was in part due to the Australian Government investment in the Head to Health service from September 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with two hubs located in Gippsland.

There were 14,975 referrals for psychology from general practices across Gippsland in 2020; 22% were for patients in East Gippsland; 21% for Latrobe; 18% Baw Baw; 17% Wellington; 14% Bass Coast; and 8% South Gippsland.

Over half (59%) of student presentations to a Doctors in Secondary Schools clinic across nine secondary schools in Gippsland were related to mental health issues.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive officer, Amanda Proposch, said the two priority issues papers provided valuable data on mental health and wellbeing across the region, and informed service commissioning.

“Our aim is for the commissioning process to be informed by best practice and through consultation with people who have lived experience,” Ms Proposch said. “Programs are delivered in a way that meets needs and aim to improve the overall health and wellbeing of people living in Gippsland.”

According to national mental health prevalence estimates, 40 per cent of the Australian population are either experiencing mental illness or are at risk of mental illness. Applying these estimates to the 2021 Gippsland population shows that:

- Over 9,000 people have severe mental illness
- 13,500 people have moderate mental illness
- 26,500 people have mild mental illness
- 68,000 are at risk of mental illness

Other key findings included:

- Significant impacts on communities when services are not available and issues are prolonged or exacerbated.



- Young people experience a pressure to succeed that can impact their wellbeing.
- Older people can feel shame and guilt when they can no longer look after themselves and avoid seeking help.
- LGBTIQ+ people may avoid accessing services due to poor past experiences.
- Financial stress can lead to poor mental health.
- Need to understand a person's experiences, their circumstances and the underlying reasons for mental health issues.
- Caring, trusted professionals and follow up leads to good outcomes.
- A need for inclusive and psychologically safe services that are more available in community-based settings.

The second priority issues paper on Services and Programs, lists the range of support available to people in Gippsland including Head to Health, Primary Mental Health and Suicide Prevention programs, secondary schools' program and Indigenous Dual Diagnosis services.

"We recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing in our community and we are committed to ensuring people can access the most appropriate services for their mental health needs at any given time," Ms Proposch said.

See the new priority issues papers here <https://gphn.org.au/resources/>

A list of Gippsland services can also be found at:

gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/mental-health-care-and-suicide-prevention

and <https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/suicide-prevention-program/>

See the Gippsland PHN Health Needs Assessment here <https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/health-planning-research-and-evaluation/population-health/our-priorities/>

ENDS

Head to Health Hubs Free call **1800 595 212**:
Baw Baw – 197-199 Sutton Street, Warragul
Wellington – 12 Inglis Street, Sale.

If you or someone you know needs help contact:

Lifeline – **13 11 14**

beyondblue Support Service – **1300 224 365**

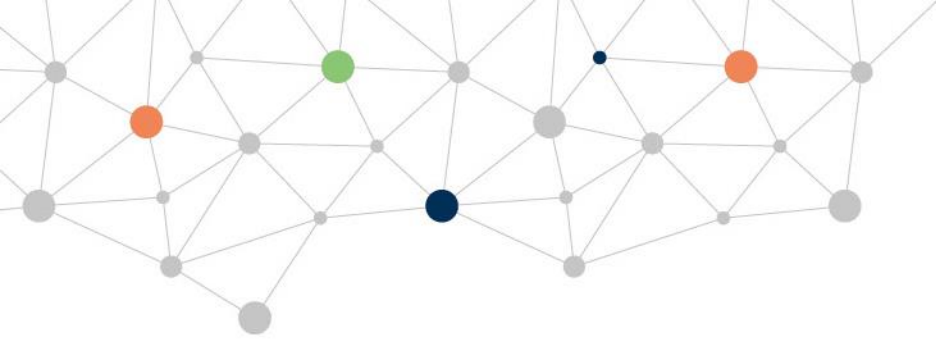
Suicide Call Back Service – **1300 659 467**

MensLine – **1300 789 987**

Kids Helpline – **1800 551 800**

Qlife – **1800 184 527**

Yarning SafeNStrong – **1800 959 563**



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

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