



MEDIA RELEASE

Suicide prevention trials complete

1 July 2022

More than 1500 community members have been formally trained to identify and respond to a person at risk of suicide in one of many outcomes during a five-year place-based suicide prevention trial.

Key suicide prevention stakeholders recently came together to recognise the outcomes of the trials across Latrobe, Bass Coast and South Gippsland.

While the trials officially ended on 30 June, Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Amanda Proposch, said the sustainability of the work at a grassroots level would see training, education and support into suicide prevention continue.

“People with lived experience of suicide, as well as local health professionals and communities were consulted prior to the delivery of place-based activities during the five-year trials,” she explained.

“Their involvement from the outset was crucial to the success of the trials. We now have an upskilled mental health workforce and trained community members. In addition, we have improved, relevant resources that can support suicide prevention in Gippsland.”

Funded by Gippsland PHN and the Victorian Department of Health, key organisations involved in the trials included Lifeline Gippsland, Wellways, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Jesuit Social Services, local government, Department of Education and emergency services.

The key achievements of the trials included;

- Education and training for over 350 mental health workers including GPs, counsellors, psychologists, emergency services and health promotion officers.
- Over 1500 community members formally trained in suicide recognition and many others upskilled.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific suicide bereavement support resources and skills.
- The delivery of suicide prevention education specific to young people, LGBTIQ+ people and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Free online suicide prevention training is still available via the Gippsland PHN website

<https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/suicide-prevention-program/qpr-online-training-for-suicide-prevention/> as well as several stories of hope and recovery from local people who have an experience of suicide.

Organisations and community groups can also access a planning tool to help them embed suicide prevention within their operations. The Gippsland Mental Health Directory is an easy to use website that



hosts a suit of resources for people looking for support about mental health, suicide, violence and trauma, and alcohol and drug use, and a podcast series will soon be released, showcasing suicide prevention activity across Gippsland.

“Alongside the tangible outcomes, these trials were invaluable because they gave a voice to local people who have a lived, or living, experience of suicidality,” Ms Proposch said.

“The conclusion of the suicide prevention trials in Gippsland and recognition of the outcomes are a key milestone; the work however must continue, and community and health professionals now have the supports and resources they need to work through suicide prevention together.”

ENDS

Caption: Gippsland PHN Project Coordinator Suicide Prevention, Brooke Carlesso and Project Coordinator Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Reform, Helen Page, who have played key roles in the five-year place-based suicide prevention trial. They were presented with flowers at the stakeholder event to mark the completion of the project.

Gippsland PHN is part of a national network of 31 Primary Health Networks across Australia. Primary Health Networks are predominantly funded by the Australian Government to tackle identified national objectives and priority areas. Visit: gphn.org.au

For more information, contact Tracy VanderZalm at Gippsland PHN on 0447 491 345.