



MEDIA RELEASE

New youth mental health service to address a gap

4 March 2024

The new Youth Enhanced Service in Gippsland will provide holistic support for young people experiencing severe or complex mental health challenges to address a gap in existing services.

Gippsland Primary Health Network will commission Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) to deliver the Youth Enhanced Service, in partnership with other agencies and health professionals, based on a national model developed by Orygen.

The Gippsland model is being developed with input from young people, their families and wider community.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said the model would target young people aged between 12 and 25 years who had complex mental health needs.

“This service will fill the gap between low intensity care and acute care in the hospital system,” Ms Proposch said. “It is sometimes referred to as the ‘missing middle’, considered too complex to be met by the primary mental health care system and not acute enough for the tertiary mental health system.”

The Youth Enhanced Service will be delivered across Gippsland from 1 July 2024 and include holistic and high-quality mental health and psycho-social supports that will be continuously adapted to meet the changing needs of young people.

RAV will tailor the Youth Enhanced model to meet the needs of young people from diverse backgrounds, ensuring all clients have access to support that is sensitive and appropriate for their cultural, language, religious, sexuality and socio-economic backgrounds.

RAV Senior Manager Operations Regional Victoria, Jo Huggins, said it was crucial for young people experiencing mental health challenges to have early access to support services.

“It’s equally important for those services to adapt as the needs of a young person change,” Ms Huggins said.



“For young people in rural areas, travel and other factors can make it difficult to find and access support and appointments. That’s why prioritising service availability and accessibility is central to our Youth Enhanced Service.

“At its core, the Youth Enhanced Service is about enabling young people to be safe, feel supported and empowered to make decisions about their healthcare journey.”

The Youth Enhanced Service will be delivered in partnership with:

- Youth Advocacy and Support Service
- Eating Disorders Victoria
- Deputy Chief Psychiatrist, Dr Leeanne Fisher
- Senior Occupational Therapist with the Social Confidence Collective, Jo Rouse
- Clinical Psychologist with Erin Dolan and Associates, Dr Erin Dolan
- Dr Anna Howsen from the Wonthaggi Medical Group

The Youth Enhanced Service will also work with a network of more than 70 local organisations, schools, health services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

ENDS

If you or someone you know needs help, contact:

Lifeline 13 11 14

Beyondblue Support Service 1300 659 467

MensLine 1300 789 987

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

Qlife 1800 184 527

Yarning SaneNStrong 1800 959 563

Head to Health 1800 595 212

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

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