

Mental Health and Wellbeing Prevention and Promotion



Please read in conjunction with previous papers describing Mental Health and Wellbeing; Issues and Impact and Services and Programs: gphn.org.au/resources/

“ If you can help someone’s mental health and their wellbeing, a lot of other stuff falls into place. ”
- Workshop participant

Foundations for mental health and wellbeing



Mental health and wellbeing is affected by many factors including:

Connections to other people



12.5% of adults in Gippsland rarely (or not often) feel valued by society (compared to **11% in Victoria**); **Latrobe** had the highest estimate in Victoria at **18.1%**



23% of students in year 7-9 in Gippsland report being bullied (**17.5% in Victoria**)

Employment



54.1% of working age people in Gippsland participate in the labour force (compared to **66.8% across Victoria**) *Gippsland is the second lowest of all PHNs*



4% unemployment rate in Gippsland (Nov 2022); higher in Latrobe (**6.6%**) and East Gippsland (**5.3%**)

- **8.3%** youth unemployment in Gippsland (**8.7% in Victoria**)

“ Changes to local industry and employment affect people in different ways, and for some, uncertainty, lack of information, or significant change can trigger distress, grief and loss. ”
- Latrobe Health Advocate

Education and training



32.8% of school leavers participated in higher education in Gippsland (**57.5% in Victoria**)



81.2% of young people (aged 16 years) in Gippsland participate in secondary school education (**88.5% in Victoria**)

Housing



More than **7,300** people in Gippsland accessed homelessness services in 2021-22

“ ... more people are presenting as homeless due to housing availability and affordability. The severity of this appears to be escalating. ”
- Gippsland PHN advisory groups

Healthy environment



A healthy natural environment can support good mental health and wellbeing while challenges such as floods, bushfires and drought can cause distress.

“ ...there has been a compounding effect on people’s mental health and wellbeing with 41% of people in bushfire-affected areas reporting higher levels of psychological distress after the first lockdown (May 2021) compared to just 16% across Victoria. ”
- East Gippsland, Connect Well project

Financial security



\$655 median weekly income in Gippsland, compared to \$805 across Victoria

Safety



All Gippsland LGAs have a high rate of family violence incidents, compared to the rest of Victoria especially in East Gippsland (139% higher), Latrobe (134% higher), Wellington (105% higher) and Bass Coast (50% higher)



Around 2 in 5 females in Gippsland feel safe walking alone at night after dark, compared to 4 in 5 males

Food



7.9% of adults in Gippsland ran out of money to buy food in the past year (compared to 5.9% in Victoria)

“ [People’s] mental health can decline if they don’t eat proper food. ”
- Latrobe Health Advocate

Good mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. It means you are in a state of wellbeing where you feel good and function well in the world.

- World Health Organisation

Resilience describes a person’s or community’s ability to cope with life’s challenges by using their inner strength and support networks.

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“...sometimes it only takes one person who loves you to find meaning in life.”
- Person with lived experience

How communities can promote mental health and wellbeing



Help people feel connected with their local community

Build strong social infrastructure with access to safe places to go to for social support, especially for people at risk of poor mental health due to stigma, discrimination and racism

Organisations where people live, work, study and play can provide a supportive environment

Local, State and Commonwealth governments and communities need to lead by example

Prioritise health equity

Prioritise social support and services for the following people, identified at greater risk of poor mental health, through early identification and intervention:

- Children and young people
- LGBTIQ+ people
- Culturally and linguistically diverse people
- People with a disability
- People in rural and remote areas
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
 - The Balit Durn Durn Social & Emotional Wellbeing Wheel represents holistic healing and includes protective factors that support good mental health



www.vaccho.org.au/balitdurndurncentre

Address stigma

Stigma around mental health and alcohol and other drug misuse is still strong in parts of the Gippsland community.

What if we could:

- Make mental wellbeing as easy to talk about as physical fitness?
- Use inclusive and plain language that reflects people's experience?
- Reduce stigma in health and support services (housing, financial, social, legal etc)?

Improve physical health

Support a commitment by all Australian governments, key professionals and peak and non-government organisations to improve the physical health of people living with mental illness through the [Equally Well initiative](#).

Improve access to mental health services when needed



Improving access to mental health services is in progress following the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-wellbeing-reform



The goal is improved access without a need for a mental health referral, including for family and carers



Co-design by people with lived experience and access to peer support workers

Healthy habits for a healthy mind



Good mental health can be promoted by doing the following regularly:

- Prioritise sleep
- Connect with friends, family or pets (ideally in person)
- Exercise / be active regularly
- Eat well
- Downtime to relax
- Focus on your mind – can include spirituality / religion, mindfulness and gratitude
- Focus on a task - employment, education or taking on a challenge
- Time for play / something that brings you joy

Seek help when needed



Crisis support 24/7

- | Lifeline: 13 11 14
- | Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
- | Latrobe Regional Hospital Mental Health Triage Service: 1300 363 322
- | For more support options, see: [Mental Health and Wellbeing - Services and Programs](#)