



Tell Gippsland PHN

JANUARY - MARCH 2024

INTRODUCTION

Gippsland Primary Health Network gathers feedback from community members, advisory groups and health professionals. This is a summary of what we've heard January to March 2024 about what is impacting health and wellbeing, and how we can make improvements.



Difficulty accessing services

- Mental health services - including triage, psychology, psychiatry
- Diagnostics - including ultrasound, ADHD
- Specialists - including paediatric
- Allied health professionals - including speech, audiology, occupational therapy, podiatry
- Aged care support in the home
- Sexual and reproductive health (abortion, contraception, testing for STIs)
- Chronic pain



Lack of equity

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Vulnerable children and their families
- Marginalised people (addiction, abuse, homeless, multicultural, judicial involvement)
- People in remote locations
- Isolated older people

"...many of our families can't get access or don't have the means to pay for services upfront when or if they are available."

- Community Member



Increasing cost of living

- Not going or delaying seeing a GP
- Not taking medications
- Unable to afford diagnostic services and specialist care
- Unable to access affordable transport

"...people who can't afford out of pocket costs are being left behind."

- Professional



Other non-medical factors affecting health

- Housing and homelessness
- Employment, including closure of power stations
- Caring responsibilities, especially for women
- Family violence
- High teacher turnover impacting students' mental health
- Isolation caused by remoteness or loneliness
- Environment, including extreme weather events, air and water quality



Lack of health workforce causes pressure

- Community awareness of how busy healthcare professionals are
- Mental health reform relies on workforce which is already stretched

"Less overworked and stressed staff means better health outcomes for patients"

- Community Member



People want compassionate care

- Safe high-quality care leads to trust
- Community connections can be a stepping stone to accessing services and supports
- Calls for holistic care and respect for alternative ways to manage health

"Look at me, listen to me, respect me as a person"

- Community Member



Healthcare system challenges

- Administration of NDIS access is a big burden on general practice
- Lack of local public referral options leads to significant costs
- People don't understand how to navigate the system
- Continuity of services and workforce impacted by short funding cycles
- Telehealth appointments can be hard to access

"...the people at the table when talking happens don't seem to be the people who actually understand what is happening and how things work."

- Professional and carer

"Greater linkages between services to ensure clients either don't fall through the cracks or end up linked in with multiple agencies addressing the same things and requiring the client to re tell their stories multiple times."

- Professional

WHAT IS WORKING WELL

- **Connect Me** - counselling and support for 4-11 years olds

"This has had great benefit to the students who have been able to get support and has been really appreciated by staff and families."

- Community member

- **Priority Primary Care Centres** have helped build partnerships with Emergency Departments and Ambulance Victoria

"Quick and easy with a young infant. Wanted to avoid ED at hospital!"

- Community member

- Indigenous Team Care Program, including **Supplementary Services**
- Access to iPads in aged care can help older people connect
- **headspace** offer in-person and online mental health services and supports for 12-25 year olds and their supporters
- **Free skin checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**
- Neighbourhood houses working with primary health care

"The nurse practitioner is excellent and so I seek care from her when I need it..."

- Community member

SUGGESTIONS

- Ensure there is support for healthcare workers' mental health.
- More funded psychologists located in GP clinics.
- Greater linkages between services to stop duplication and improve patient experiences.
- Improve funding models by working with providers.

"A supportive doctor listening to my needs. Respecting me."

- Community member

"Accessible, affordable bulk billing clinic with a permanent GP that is invested in my healthcare and treats me with respect"

- Community member

"Comprehensive relationships and sexuality education for young people both in and out of school settings."

- Professional

"Supporting more skilled people to move to and stay in Gippsland for long periods of time."

- Professional



Resources and services

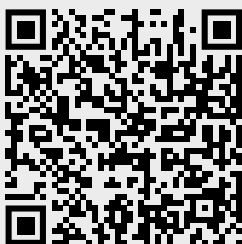
- **1800 My Options** for evidence-based information about contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health
- **1800 RESPECT** - 1800 737 732 - support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence
- **Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault**
- **Gippsland PHN events and training program**
- **Head to Health** mental health hubs for help, support and access to care, call 1800 595 212
- **Health Access** after-hours telehealth service, call 1800 272 767
- **Digital health training for healthcare providers**, including telehealth and Provider Connect



Crisis services

- **Lifeline** - 13 11 14
- **Suicide Call Back Service** - 1300 659 467
- **Beyond Blue** - 1300 224 636
- **MensLine Australia** - 1300 789 978
- **Kids Helpline** - 1800 551 800
- **ReachOut** - Online service for under25s and their parents
- **13YARN - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Support** - 13 92 76

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If you have questions or would like to request the detailed document that informed this infographic, please contact tellgippslandphn@gphn.org.au or (03) 5175 5444.