

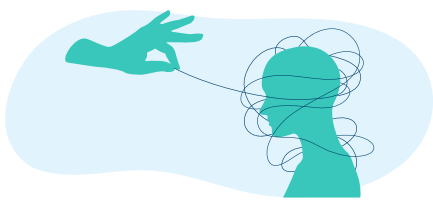


Tell Gippsland PHN

JUNE 2026

Gippsland PHN regularly gathers feedback and insights from community members, advisory groups, and health professionals. This summary reflects the feedback we received from January to March 2026. It highlights key factors affecting health and wellbeing in Gippsland, as well as opportunities for improvement.

Challenges for Gippsland



Unmet needs for mental health and alcohol and other drug services

- Demand for mental health and alcohol and other drug support remains high across Gippsland
- Service capacity and a shortage of experienced and specialised workforce impact access
- Pathways for people with dual diagnosis of mental health and alcohol and other drug problems can be complex and challenging
- Mental health providers are reporting more people with experience of family violence including sexual violence
- Referral options for individuals with complex intersecting needs are limited
- Stigma impacts people accessing alcohol and other drug services

"Patients who have multiple complex conditions often find the management of each condition is siloed."

- Community member



Pressures on children, young people and families

- Exposure to pornography and other confronting content impacting health and wellbeing
- Concerns raised about children expressing suicidal thoughts
- Reports of increased cocaine use among teenagers
- Limited mental health service options for children with moderate mental health needs
- Shortage of workforce experienced with working with children
- Pressures on schools and families when there are few referral pathways
- Housing insecurity, financial hardship and exposure to violence are compounding family stress

"It must not be assumed that everyone in the community has safe / reliable family and friends situations."

- General Practitioner

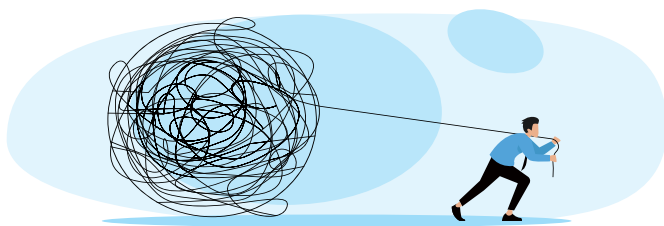


Variable access to primary care

- Difficulties accessing affordable GPs in some rural and remote areas
- Improved access to bulk billing through **Strengthening Medicare reforms** reported
- General practices are expanding their capacity in some areas
- High reliance on registrars to meet demand for bulk billed services
- Allied health and podiatry workforce shortages are impacting service availability and wait times
- Continuity of care can be difficult if unable to see the same GP
- Lack of availability of affordable services and supports to enable older people to live at home

"For my family, we have access to bulk billing GPs ... this is a privilege that is not afforded by all in Gippsland. It should be."

- Community member

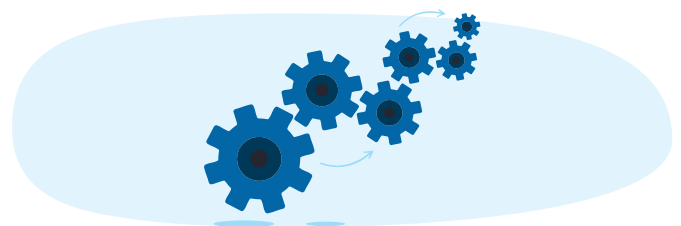


Social and economic stressors impacting the community

- Increase in people experiencing homelessness
- Community safety concerns related to public intoxication
- Community pressures are increasing demand on health and social service providers
- A need to support vulnerable people in the community, especially during events like bushfires
- Protective factors include exercise and community support
- Limited access to affordable transport impacts access to specialist services
- Additional pressures due to higher fuel prices

"Patients missing communication and touch of a person who cares and will just listen."

- General practice



Systems challenges impacting access and quality of care

- Gap fees limit access to specialist services
- Change in aged care assessment tool may be resulting in less person-centred care
- Increased pressures for aged care workers and families navigating the system
- Referral pathways could be improved for people experiencing multiple service needs across mental health, NDIS, alcohol and other drugs, justice and intellectual disability services
- Opportunities for improved communication and connectivity between providers
- Funding uncertainty creates instability for providers and communities
- Challenges for local hospital services to meet the demand of a growing and ageing population

"Patient has to adapt to the system"

- Community member

"Technology for the older population with online platforms a barrier."

- Clinician

WHAT IS WORKING WELL

- New Lung Cancer Nurse Coordinator at Latrobe Regional Health to support the **National Lung Cancer Screening Program**, including to provide culturally safe lung cancer screening
- Hospital GP Liaison Officer helping with the transition from hospital to primary care
- Increased usage of online service options, including for prescriptions, psychology and specialist services
- **Flying Doctor Community Transport Program** allows patients to access services not available locally
- Gippsland's **Local Health Service Networks** are engaging well with primary care
- Lived experience programs provide an opportunity for Gippsland participants to contribute to integration of healthcare across acute and primary care
- **Health on Wheels** outreach service helping improve access to health care for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness in Wellington and East Gippsland
- **Mobile Women's Health Clinic** are seeing high demand
- Doctors using AI scribe tools can save 2–3 hours daily on administration, noting the need to read over the notes and make adjustments

"Telehealth option has been really beneficial for women who may otherwise find it difficult to access services while managing work, children."

- Professional

Gippsland PHN recommendations

- Consider locating mental health and drug and alcohol services next to emergency departments
- Support for a salaried Nurse Practitioner model for mental health and alcohol and other drugs
- Support upskilling of GPs, nurses and allied health providers in mental health, especially for children and young people
- Support for increased capacity in primary care to work with people experiencing complex intersecting needs
- Support for workforce attraction and retention solutions
- Support for marginalised communities to access care by building trust, offering no or low-cost options, outreach and walk-in clinics
- Strengthen awareness in the community to better support marginalised communities
- Use co-design methods to include people with lived or living experience when creating new models of care
- Use personal stories to improve health messaging
- Strengthen emergency response and preparedness, including through improved support for community hubs
- Support initiatives to increase awareness of bulk billing general practice options

"Attract more GPs and allied health specialists to the region - it's a beautiful place to live and work."

- Community member

Resources and services

- **1800MEDICARE** - **1800 633 422** free health advice from a registered nurse 24/7
- **Medicare Mental Health** - **1800 595 212** a free confidential service to connect you with help and support
- **Find a bulk billing practice near you**
- **Directline** - **1800 888 236** alcohol and other drug counselling and referral 24/7
- **1800 RESPECT** - **1800 737 732** or **0458 737 732** (text available 24/7) support for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence
- **Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault** (GCASA)
- **Gippsland Pathways** for health professionals in Gippsland
- **Gippsland PHN events and training program**
- **headspace** - **1800 650 890** (support for young people aged 12 to 25 years)
- **Maternal and Child Health Line** - **13 22 29** (for Victorian families with children from birth to 6 years, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **The Raising Children Network** – providing support for parents and carers with evidence-based resources for children and young people from pregnancy through to 18 years
- **Triple P – Positive Parenting Program** support for parents and carers of children up to age 12 to address issues that arise from screens and screen time use



Crisis services

- **13YARN** - **13 92 76** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support
- **Beyond Blue** - **1300 224 636**
- **Lifeline** - **13 11 14** and **0477 13 11 14** (text available 24/7)
- **Kids Helpline** - **1800 551 800**
- **MensLine Australia** - **1300 789 978**
- **ReachOut** - online service for under 25s and their parents
- **Suicide Call Back Service** - **1300 659 467**

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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.