

21 March 2019

Official opening of new headspace centre marks new chapter for youth mental health in Bass Coast and South Gippsland

A new **headspace** centre in Wonthaggi was officially opened today, welcoming a new chapter for youth mental health in Bass Coast and South Gippsland.

The event was well-attended, with local community leaders, **headspace** staff, service providers and young people showing their support for the new centre. Among the attendees were Mr Russell Broadbent, MP, Member for McMillan, representatives from centre operator Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) and the centre's consortium organisations, staff from contract manager Gippsland Primary Health Network (PHN) and other service providers.

Local young people were also in attendance, including members of the centre's Youth Advisory Group, a group of young people who provide direct input to the centre to ensure that it and its services and events are inclusive and relevant.

The event's proceedings began with a Welcome to Country, performed by Steve Parker, followed by speeches by Mr Broadbent MP, Dr Sinead de Gooyer, Chair of Gippsland PHN, Vikki Ryall, **headspace** National Office Executive Director, and Dr Andrew Bickerdike, CEO of RAV.

headspace Wonthaggi is a full service centre that commenced delivering services on 2 January 2019. It supports young people across Bass Coast and South Gippsland, including through five outposts at Youth Clinics in Wonthaggi, Foster, Leongatha, Korumburra and Cowes.

Dr Bickerdike said that RAV had an established presence in Gippsland and was looking forward to increasing youth mental health services in the area.

"RAV has a long history of providing services in Gippsland and providing mental health services, including at **headspace** Bairnsdale. We're proud to now be leading a consortium of local organisations to deliver **headspace** Wonthaggi's services," Dr Bickerdike said.

headspace CEO, Jason Trethowan said that "**headspace** Wonthaggi extends the important early intervention work of **headspace** around the country. **headspace** is helping thousands of young people across Australia who are going through a tough time."

"Since **headspace** was established in 2006, over 450,000 young people have visited a **headspace** centre across Australia and we know that **headspace** Wonthaggi will play an important role in what **headspace** will achieve in the future in the critical area of youth mental health and wellbeing."

Following the official proceedings, attendees had the opportunity to tour the new centre and chat with **headspace** staff and members of the Youth Advisory Group about the new centre and its services.

"**headspace** helps me out and through the Youth Advisory Group and centre I've made new friends who have welcomed me with open arms. I hope other young people will feel the same and I'd invite them to come to **headspace** to see how it can help them," Youth Advisory Group member, Till, said.

headspace Wonthaggi Centre Manager, Ms Cate Chaiyot, said that the local community in Wonthaggi, as well as wider communities across Bass Coast and South Gippsland, had already embraced the new **headspace** services.

Media release

“It’s great to see not only young people but community members of all ages welcoming **headspace**. We’ve already supported lots of young people and we invite all young people, and their friends and family to contact us and have a chat about how we can help,” Ms Chaiyot said.

-ENDS -

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About headspace Wonthaggi

headspace Wonthaggi is designed to address the local needs of communities. It provides services in each of **headspace’s** four core areas; mental health and wellbeing, physical and sexual health, work and study support, and alcohol and other drug services.

Young people can come into the centre, call (03) 5671 5900, or email info@headspacewonthaggi.org.au to make appointments and see how **headspace** can help them. **headspace** Wonthaggi is located at 5b Murray Street, Wonthaggi and is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10am to 6pm, and on Tuesdays from 12 to 8pm. The centre is closed weekends and public holidays.

For more information, visit <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/wonthaggi>

headspace Wonthaggi is operated by lead agency Relationships Australia Victoria, with the support of contract manager Gippsland Primary Health Network, and in partnership with a consortium of the following local services; Latrobe Regional Hospital, Wellways, Advanced Personnel Management, Australian Community Support Organisation, Quantum Support Services, Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault, Youth Support and Advocacy Service, Bass Coast Health Service, Department of Education and Training, South Gippsland Hospital, Wonthaggi Medical Centre, Leongatha Healthcare Services and Korumburra Medical Centre.

All **headspace** services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. Administration of funding is carried out by the headspace centre’s local Primary Health Network (PHN), in this case, Gippsland PHN.