

HBNC

Creating Connected Communities



State of Mental Health Report 2023

Hinkler and Fraser Coast



The State of Mental Health Report 2023: Hinkler is an initiative of the Social Shift,
funded by Department of Social Services

www.socialshift.com.au

www.hbnc.com.au

Version 1 published December 2023



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We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



CAUTION:

Some people may find parts of this report confronting or distressing. Please carefully consider your needs when reading the following report. This report discusses mental health issues including self-harm and suicide. It also discusses domestic & family violence. The information included here places an emphasis on data, and as such, can appear to depersonalise the pain and loss behind the statistics. The HBNC acknowledges the individuals, families and communities affected by suicide, mental health & DFV each year. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that information relating to Indigenous mental health and suicide is included.

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

Don't go it alone. Please reach out for help.

Lifeline:

13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue:

1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au

Kids Helpline:

1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au

Headspace:

1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au

13YARN:

Speak to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis supporter on 13 92 76 or visit 13yar.org.au

WHERE TO FIND HELP

If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual abuse or family violence contact:

National Sexual Assault, DV Counselling Service 24 hour helpline:

1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732

24-hour Emergency Accommodation helpline:

on 1800 800 588

Safe at Home helpline:

1800 633 937

National Violence and Abuse Trauma Counselling and Recovery Service:

1800 385 578

or Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline 1800 497 212

SHE (free and confidential counselling and support):

6278 9090

Sexual Assault Support Services:

6231 1811 or after hours 6231 1817

Family Violence Crisis and Support Service:

1800 608 122

Bravehearts-Sexual Assault Support for Children:

1800 BRAVE 1

Wide Bay Sexual Assault Service:

4194 5230



MENTAL HEALTH SNAPSHOT

13% of Fraser Coast residents have a long-term mental health condition.

12% of Bundaberg residents have a long-term mental health condition.

9.6% of Queenslanders have a long-term mental health condition.

8.8% of Australians have a long-term mental health condition.



SPECIFIC GROUPS

14% of women in Fraser Coast & 13% in Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition.

11% of men in Fraser Coast & 9% in Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition.

18% of First Nations people in Fraser Coast & 12% in Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition.

15% of youth in Fraser Coast & 14% in Bundaberg 15-24 have a long-term mental health condition.

35% of residents in Fraser Coast & 32% in Bundaberg with a core need for assistance have a long-term mental health condition.

22% of veterans & those servicing in Fraser Coast & 19% in Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition.

Mental Health Snapshot

Hinkler State of Mental Health Report 2023

1

OUR LOCAL WELLBEING

Fraser Coast residents rated their overall wellbeing an average 6.6 out of 10. 63% said their wellbeing was good to great. 37% of residents said their wellbeing was average to very poor.

Bundaberg residents rated their overall wellbeing an average 5.8 out of 10. 54% said their wellbeing was good to great. 46% said their wellbeing was average to very poor.

The biggest challenges for people in Fraser Coast were financial challenges (43%), & personal challenges (40%).

The biggest challenges for people in Bundaberg were financial (54%) & other (mainly health) (48%).

2

3



ECONOMIC IMPACTS

An estimated \$94.8 million dollars is spent by the Federal Government each year on mental health-related services in the Hinkler region.

An estimated \$12.8 million dollars is spent annually on medicare-related mental health costs for the region in the Hinkler region.

4

5




SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

17% of people in Fraser Coast & Bundaberg earning <\$650/week have a long-term mental health condition.

22% of unemployed people in Fraser Coast & Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition.

38% of people in Fraser Coast & 36% in Bundaberg have multiples long-term health conditions.

62% of people in Fraser Coast & 73% in Bundaberg feel isolated & disconnected from their community.



Mental health is a state of wellbeing, in which an individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to their community

-World Health Organisation





Executive Summary

It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes a community to support those living with mental illness to live healthy and purposeful lives. Too often mental health is seen as an issue for hospitals and psychologists to deal with. However, we as a community can do much to prevent mental illness and support those who do suffer before they experience situations requiring emergency interventions. The State of Mental Health Report 2023: Hinkler and Fraser Coast, collates local data for the regions, with the aim to create a snapshot for discussion and collective community action to address our local challenges surrounding mental health & wellbeing.


The State of Mental Health Report 2023 has been developed by the HBNC Social Shift with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) Community-led Support Fund. The report stems from the recent DSS Bundaberg-Hervey Bay Local Services Plan 2023 that prioritised improving community services including supporting the collation of community data at a regional level as a recognised need and gap.

Data for this report has been collected in a number of ways:

- Using data HBNC has collected through the recent Fraser Coast and Bundaberg Wellbeing Surveys
- Utilising mental health data that was collected for the first time in the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census
- Research on specific groups and the social determinants impacting on mental health and wellbeing
- Queensland and National data have also been researched for comparison for a wider snapshot

Mental Health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to our community. It is an integral component of health and wellbeing that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the region we live in. Mental health is a basic human right (WHO, n.d). Globally, 1 in 8 people (12.5%) have a mental health condition. In Australia, 8.8% of people have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). In Queensland, 9.6% do.

It is no secret that mental health is a challenge for our local regions. Fraser Coast and Hinkler residents experience higher incidence of long-term mental health conditions than Queensland and Australia. In the Fraser Coast 13% of residents have a long-term mental health condition, and in Bundaberg, 12% do. Higher incidence rates in our local regions cost an estimated \$94.8 million in federal government spending on mental health-related services annually. Among local residents, specific groups experience mental illness in different ways including women experiencing higher rates of mental illness, but men being three times more likely to die from suicide than women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experiencing disproportionately higher rates of mental ill health than the general population, anxiety and depression being in the top five burdens of disease for youth, and people living with a disability as well as veterans and those currently serving experiencing high levels of long-term mental illness.





Life factors also impact the incidence of mental illness. In the Fraser Coast and Hinkler socioeconomic disadvantage, unemployment, physical health co-morbidity, and social isolation and loneliness are particular challenges that have resulted in very high incidence of long-term mental illness. In Maryborough, 22% of people earning less than \$650 per week have a long-term mental illness. In Bundaberg, 17% of residents do. In Childers, 37% of unemployed people have a long-term mental condition, in Maryborough 27% of residents do, and in Bundaberg 22% of residents do. In Fraser Coast, 62% of residents reported feeling disconnected and isolated from the local community, while in Bundaberg 73% felt disconnected.

It can be easy to depersonalise the data we read at times and forget that these numbers and percentages are our family, friends, neighbours and fellow residents experiencing these very real issues. With such disturbing data, what can we as a community do to support our family, friends, neighbours and fellow residents experiencing such difficulties? The Social Shift: Community-led Support Fund, through HBNC (DSS Brokerage Organisation), is calling for innovative project applications to be funded to address our local challenges around mental health, domestic and family violence, alcohol and other drugs, and employment. Hinkler is only one of four areas in Australia to receive this funding from the Australian Government due to our high rates of social challenges. This State of Mental Health Report 2023 showcases some of the community-led initiatives already existing, innovative activities and programs from other areas around the world, and aims to inspire communities, groups and organisations to develop new responses.



What would Fraser Coast and Hinkler look like if our regions were recognised for our state of wellness and wellbeing instead of our state of mental health?


Want to know more about the
Social Shift (Community-Led
Support Fund Initiative?)

SCAN ME





What mental health
needs is more sunlight,
more candor, and more
unashamed conversations
-Glenn Close





1. Our Local Wellbeing

What are people in Fraser Coast & Hinkler saying about their wellbeing?



1.1 Fraser Coast Wellbeing Survey 2023

What are people on the Fraser Coast saying about their wellbeing?

Throughout October and November 2023, HBNC conducted a Community Wellbeing Survey across the Fraser Coast. The aim of the survey was to get a basic baseline of how people were feeling about their wellbeing, how connected they feel to their local community and their suggestions on how wellbeing and connection can be improved in the region.



63%

Of Fraser Coast residents said their wellbeing was good to great



37%

Of Fraser Coast residents said their wellbeing was average to very poor



62%

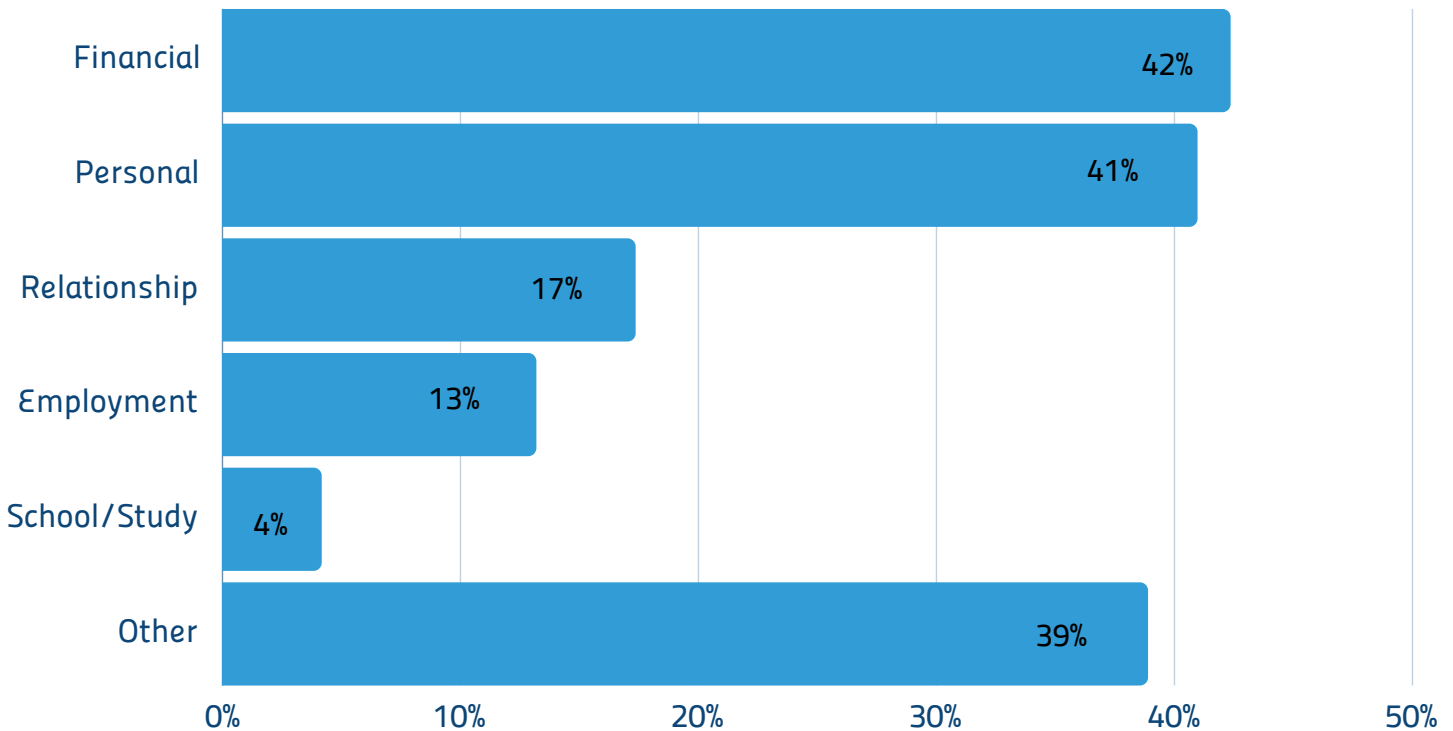
Of Fraser Coast residents said they felt average to very poor connection to their community



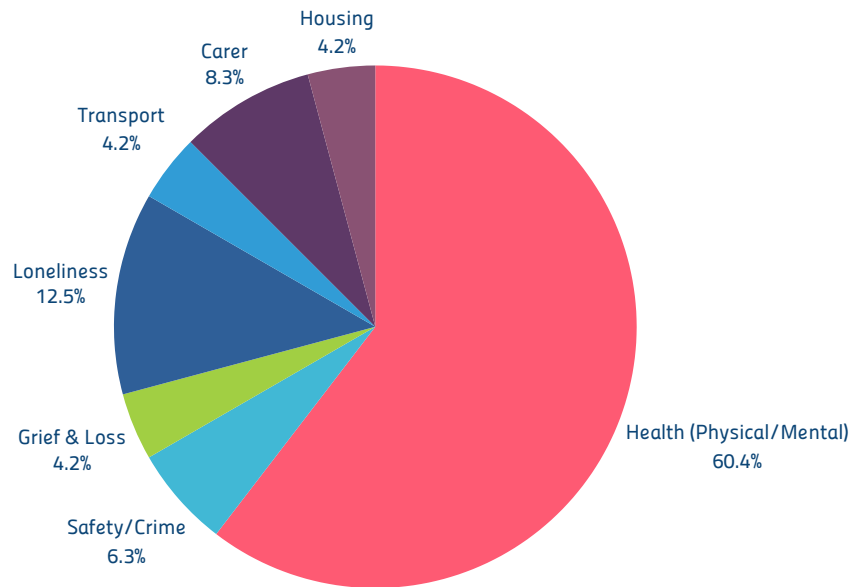
38%

Of Fraser Coast residents said they felt good to great connection to their community

Reported Challenges Affecting Wellbeing

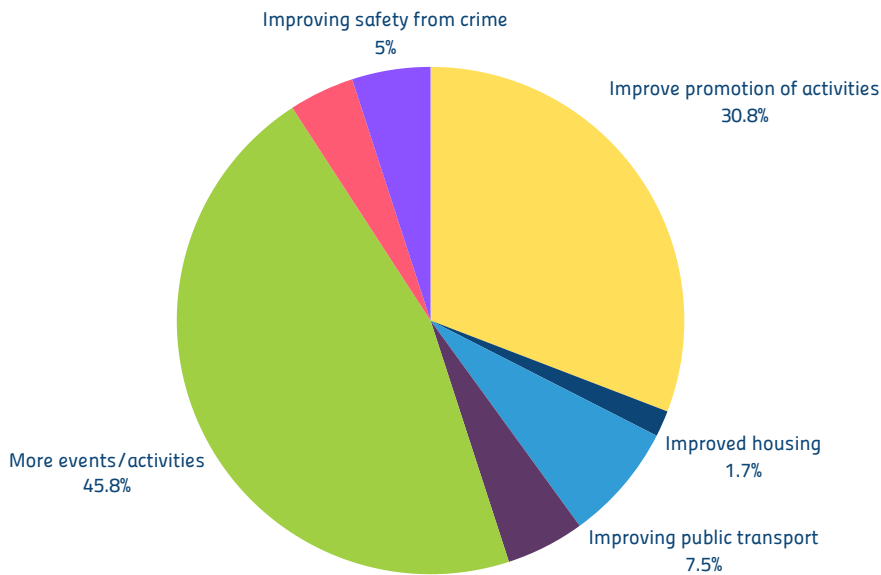


Reported Challenges Affecting Wellbeing- "Other"



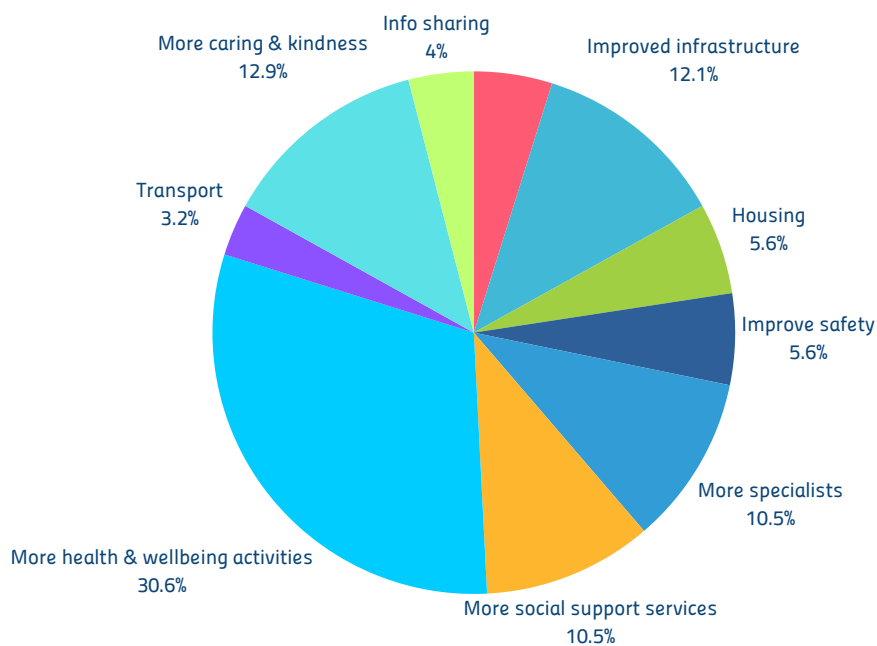
Of those who replied "other", the biggest challenges specified were health (60.4%), loneliness (12.5%), challenges associated with being a carer (8.3%), and safety and crime (6.3%).

What do residents think is needed to improve the connectedness of our community?



Survey comments were categorised into the above chart. Fraser Coast residents would most like to see more events & activities that are affordable and inclusive (45.8%), improved promotion of activities and events (30.8%), Improved public transportation (7.5%), improved equity and inclusion (5%), improved safety from crime (5%), improved town infrastructure (4.2%) and improved housing (1.7%). For full list of comments please see Appendix A.

What do residents think is needed to improve the wellbeing of our community?

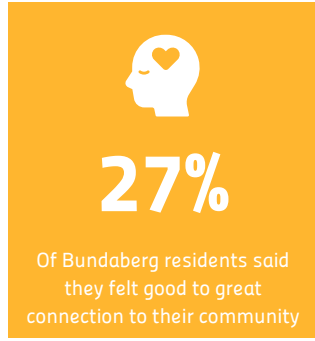
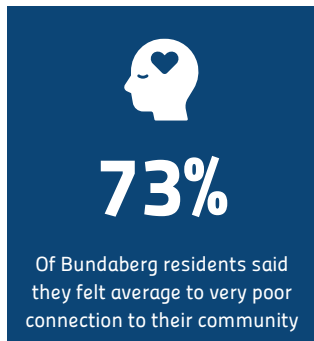


Survey comments were categorised into the above chart. To improve community wellbeing, Fraser Coast residents would most like to see more health & wellbeing activities (30.6%), more caring & kindness in the community (12.9%), improved infrastructure (12.1%), more mental health care specialists (10.5%), more social support services available (10.5%), improved housing (5.6%), improved safety from crime (5.6%), information sharing (4%), and transport (3.2%). For full list of comments please see Appendix A.

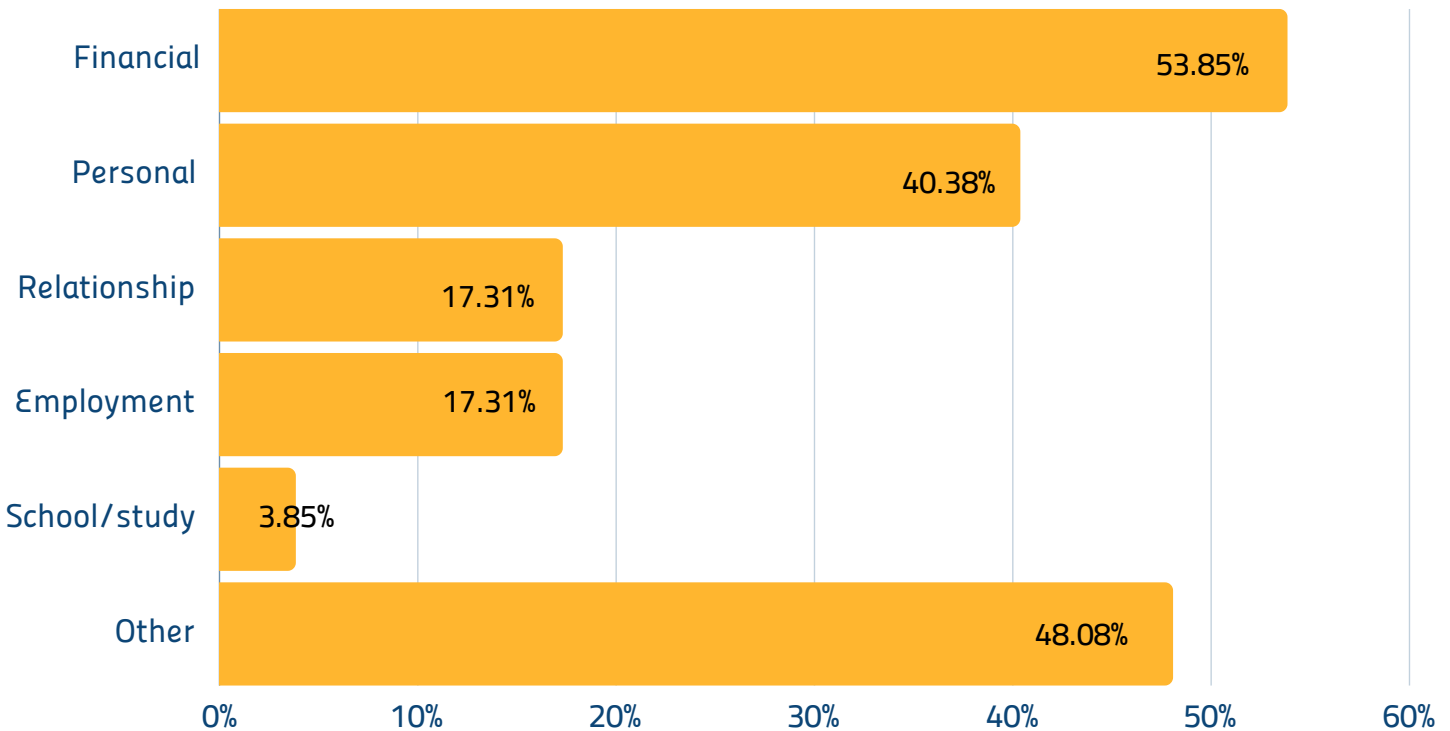
1.2 Bundaberg Wellbeing Survey 2023

What are people in Bundaberg saying about their wellbeing?

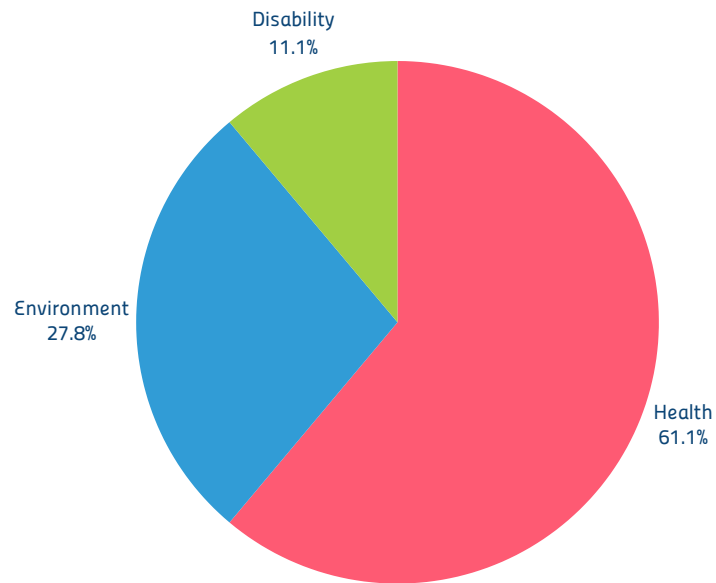
Throughout October and November 2023, HBNC conducted a Community Wellbeing Survey across the Bundaberg community. The aim of the survey was to get a basic baseline of how people were feeling about their wellbeing, how connected they feel to their local community and their suggestions on how wellbeing and connection can be improved in the region.



Reported Challenges Affecting Wellbeing

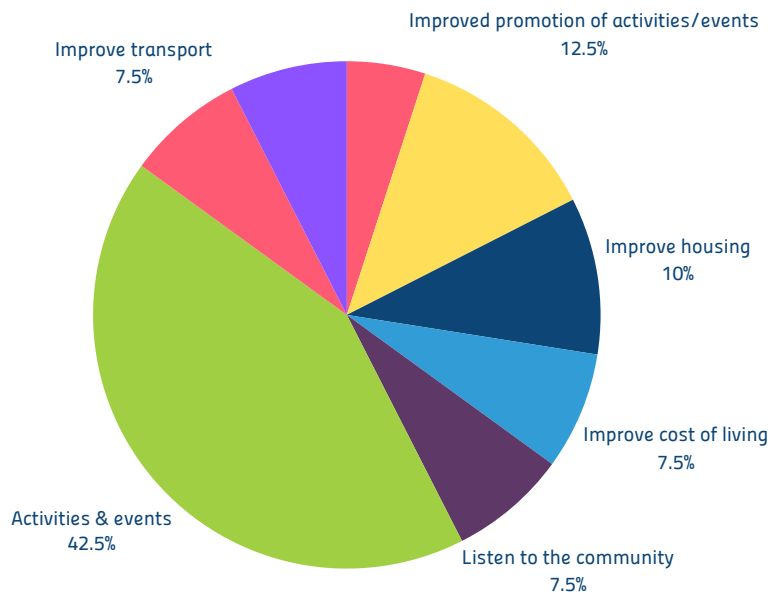


Reported Challenges Affecting Wellbeing- "Other"



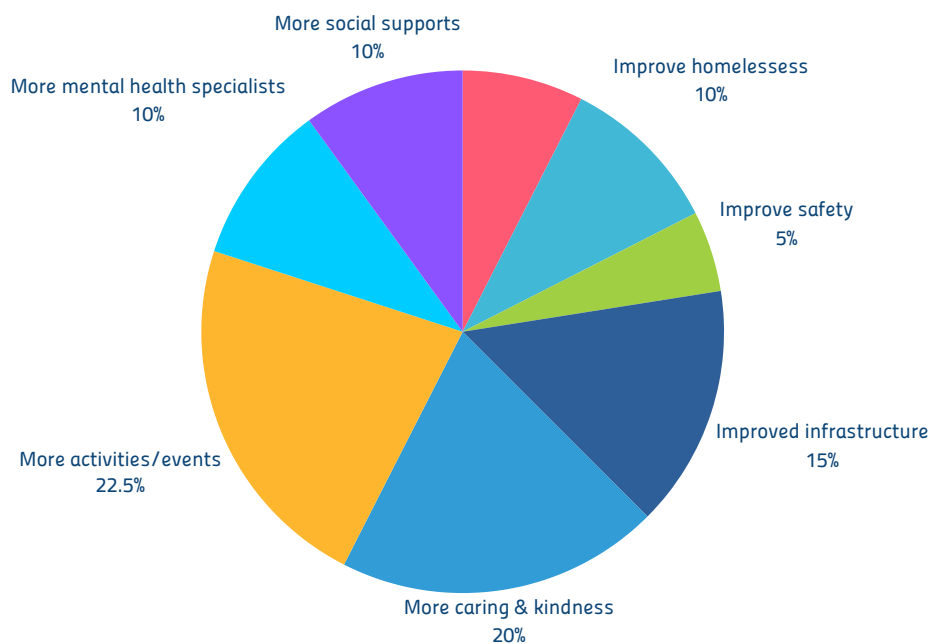
Of those who replied "other", the biggest challenges specified were health (61.1%), environment (27.8%) and disability (11.1%).

What do residents think is needed to improve the connectedness of our community?




Survey comments were categorised into the above chart. Bundaberg residents would most like to see more affordable, free and inclusive activities and events (42.5%), improved promotion of activities & events (12.5%), improved housing (10%), improved transport to outlying areas (7.5%), improved cost of living (7.5%), more listening to the community (7.5%), improved infrastructure (7.5%), and improved safety (5%). For full list please see Appendix A.

What do residents think is needed to improve the wellbeing of our community?



Survey comments were categorised into the above chart. To improve community wellbeing, Bundaberg residents would most like to see more activities & events (22.5%), more caring & kindness in the community (20%), improved infrastructure (15%), Improved housing (10%), more mental health specialists (10%), more social support services (10%), improved cost of living (7.5%) and improved safety (5%). For full list of comments please see Appendix A.



Vulnerability sounds like truth and
feels like courage. Truth and courage
aren't always comfortable, but
they're never weakness

—Brene Brown





Showcase

[LEARN MORE](#)



Connecting Communities: Social Prescription for Health and Wellbeing

HBNC's Connecting Communities Social Prescription Pilot aims to support and empower every person to connect, participate, contribute and thrive in our community.

Based on models developed in the UK, social prescribing is proven to improve health outcomes by addressing the issues of social isolation and loneliness within our community.

The Connecting Community Social Prescription Pilot program has been funded by the Queensland Government, and enables health care professionals to refer patients to a HBNC Community Connector, to co-design a non-clinical social prescription approach to improving their health and wellbeing. Residents can also refer themselves to the program.

Participants work closely with one of the friendly team to help identify activities, hobbies, sports or groups that may be of interest to them.

Once you come in contact with program either through a referral from your health provider or by contacting us yourself, you will be assigned a Community Connector who will work closely with you to identify your goals, needs and interests and connect you with local groups or activities that match. The Connector or a volunteer may accompany you to a number of the activity sessions to reduce the fear and overwhelm often associated with new environments, or we can simply put you in contact with local activities that you may be interested in.



HBNC

Creating Connected Communities





2. Mental Health Snapshot

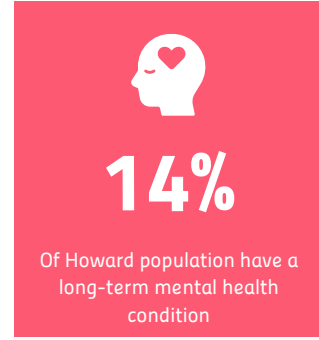
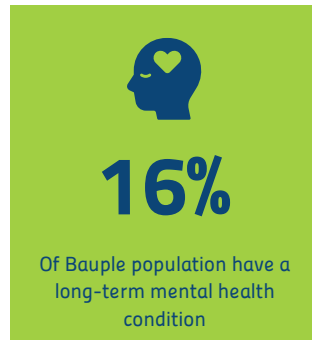
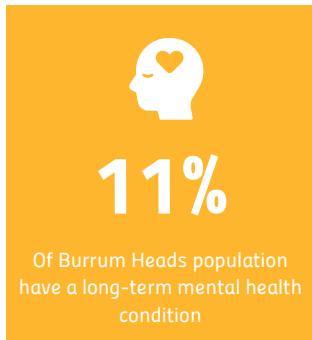
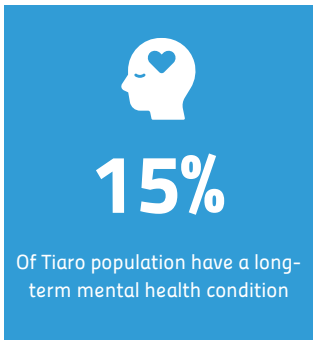
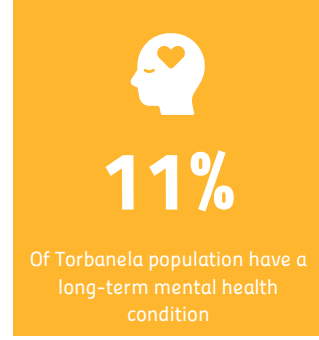
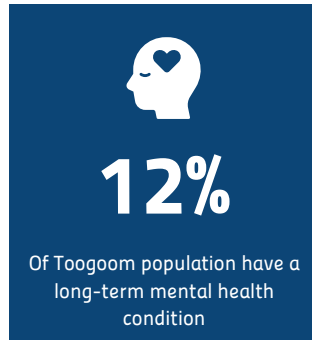
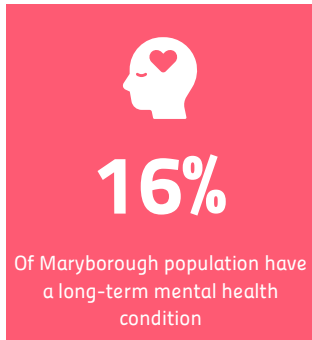
Who is experiencing mental health issues?



2.1 Fraser Coast Snapshot

13% of residents on the Fraser Coast have a long-term mental health issue (including depression or anxiety)

ABS 2021 Census data shows that 13% of the Fraser Coast population has a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). This is a much higher compared to Queensland rates (9.6%), Regional Queensland (9%) and Australia (8.8%). Within the Fraser Coast, Maryborough and Bauple populations have the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions with 16% of population reporting they had a long-term mental health condition. This was followed by Tiaro where 15% of population reported they had a long-term mental health condition and Howard (14%).



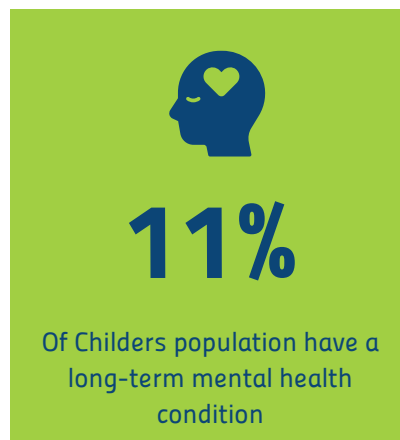
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.



2.2 Bundaberg Snapshot

12% of Bundaberg residents have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)

ABS 2021 Census data shows that 12% of the Bundaberg population have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). This is 1% lower than Fraser Coast but also much higher than Queensland rates (9.6%), Regional Queensland (9%), and Australia (8.8%). Childers had 1% lower incidence of long-term mental health conditions (11%) than Bundaberg.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.





2.3 Queensland Snapshot

The Queensland population has a higher percentage of people with long-term mental health conditions than the rest of Australia.

According to 2021 Census data, Queensland (9.6%) has a higher percentage of people with long-term mental health conditions than the rest of Australia (8.8%). However residents of the Hinkler & Fraser Coast regions have a much higher incidence than Queensland. Mental health conditions are the most prevalent long-term health condition for Queenslanders (Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO), 2023).

People living in regional, rural and remote places like Hinkler and the Fraser Coast, face more challenges to accessing mental health services due to smaller populations in towns, long distances sometimes required to access services, inadequate workforce responses and service delivery constraints (Queensland Government, 2022).



9.6%

Of the QLD population have a long-term mental health condition



5.2M

People live in Queensland



38

Average age of people living in Queensland



38%

Of Queenslanders live in regional or remote areas



49.2%

Of Queensland population is male



50.8%

Of Queensland population is female

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-qld-2021>





2.4 Australia Snapshot

Over 2 in 5 Australians have experienced a mental disorder at some point in their lives.

According to the ABS, over two in five Australians aged 16–85 years (43.7% or 8.6 million people) had experienced a mental disorder at some time in their life. The 2021 Census shows 8.8% of Australians have a long-term mental health condition. Additionally, 5% of Australians have a severe mental illness.



8.8%

Of Australians have a long-term mental health condition



43.7%

Of Australians have experienced a mental disorder at some point in their life



5%

of Australians have a severe mental illness



25.4M

Population of Australia



49.3%

Of Australian population is male



50.7%

Of Australian population is female

Sources:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/2020-21>

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/mental-health/topic-areas/mental-illness>





2.5 Global Snapshot

Approximately 1 in 8 people around the world have a mental health condition

According to the World Health Organisation's World Mental Health Report, 12.5% of people globally (970 million) had a mental health condition in 2019. Of those, 47.6% of male and 52.4% are female. Children & youth represent 20% of those suffering from mental disorders. Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent of mental health disorders (31%), followed by depressive disorders (28.9%). These figures rose during the covid-19 pandemic with the incidence of depressive disorders rising 28% and anxiety disorders 26% in just one year.



12.5%

Of people globally have a mental health condition



970M

People worldwide struggle with mental illness



14.3%

Of deaths each year are attributable to mental disorders



20%

Of those suffering from mental health are youth and children



47.6%

Of those struggling with mental illness are male



52.4%

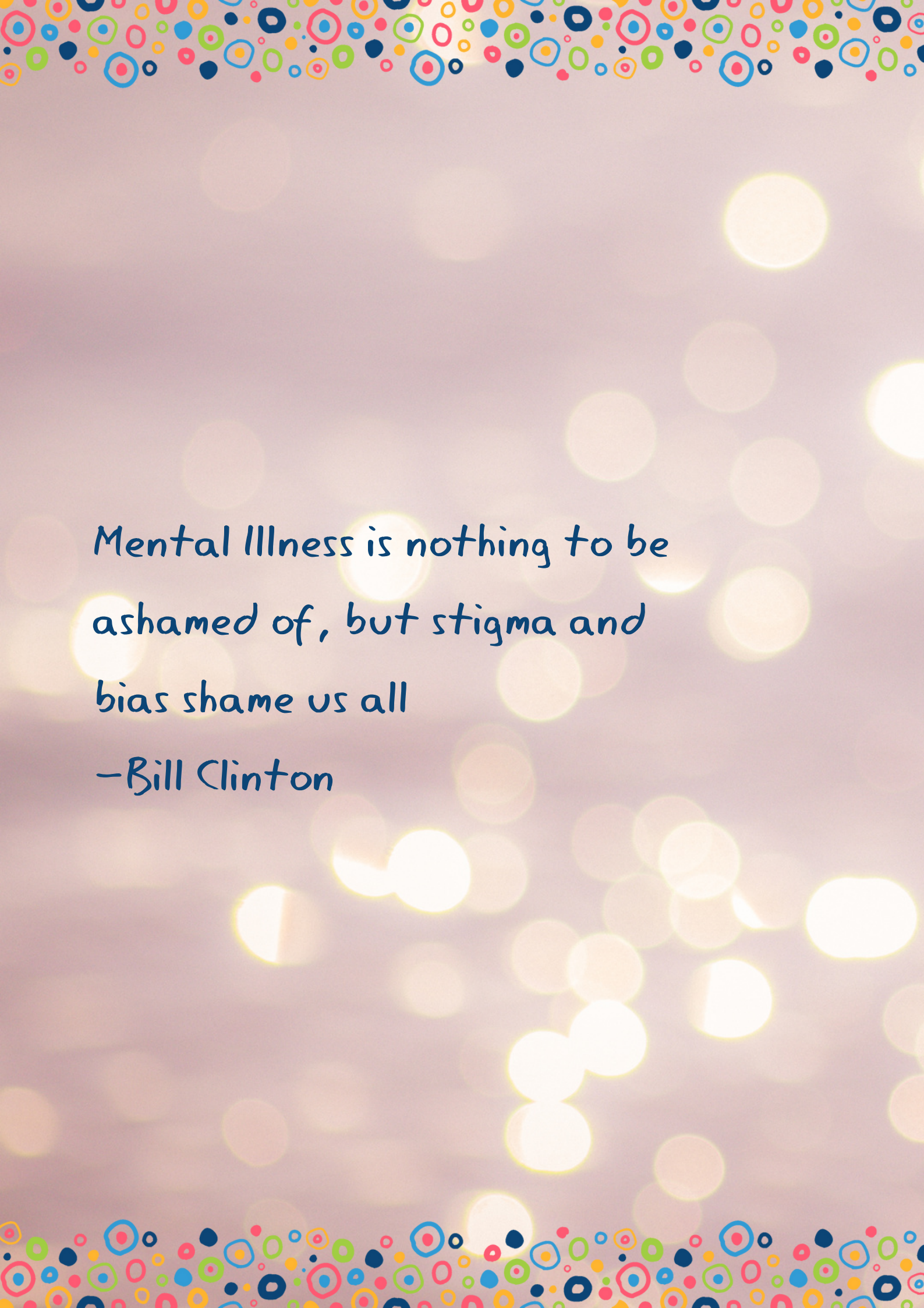
Of those struggling with mental illness are female

Sources:

WHO World Mental Health Report

<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/356119/9789240049338-eng.pdf?sequence=1>





Mental Illness is nothing to be
ashamed of, but stigma and
bias shame us all

-Bill Clinton

Showcase

Red Bike Adventures

[LEARN MORE](#)



Red Bike Adventures is a community non-for-profit based in the Fraser Coast. Their purpose is to raise necessary funds and resources to support mental health awareness campaigns and mental health initiatives, programmes, and education.

Red Bike Adventures strives to connect the disconnected with counselling, education, support programs and advocate for mental health.

Red Bike Adventures Inc. started as social non-for-profit club whose plan was to raise awareness and funding for various local community groups in need through raffles, rides and organising social events. Red Bike was founded in 2020 by a group of mates who, through the COVID-19 pandemic, decided to finally set their fifteen-year plan, to ride a postie bike across K'Gari (Fraser Island) into motion.

Within the community at this time many were suffering; suicide was becoming an increasing issue, with 14 suicides in just 15 weeks of young adults and children between the ages of 12-21. With the rise of mental health issues in Hervey Bay, Red Bike Adventures saw an opportunity to use the events to help raise money for local charities, to raise awareness and support mental health programs locally.

Red Bike Adventures partnered with the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre & Livin, in hopes of helping to stop these statistics from rising.

Since 2021 Red Bike have raised over \$54,000 which has gone directly to providing funded counselling sessions to the local community, suicide prevention programs and students studying toward their mental health careers.





3. Economic Impacts of Mental Health

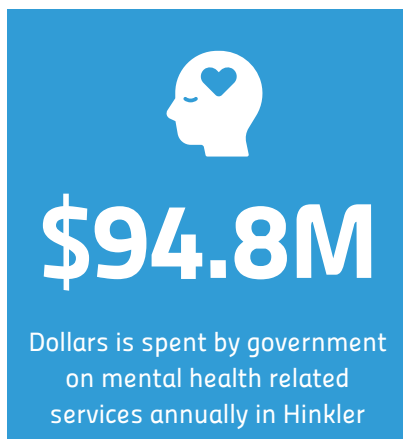
How much are we spending on mental health?



3.1 Economic Impacts of Mental Health

An estimated 94.8 million dollars is spent by the federal government each year on mental health-related services in the Hinkler region.

The economic impacts of mental health costs are far reaching. The Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC) (2020) conservatively estimated that mental ill-health cost the national economy \$200-220 billion per year or between \$550-600m per day. This includes \$43-70 billion in economic costs, \$16 billion in health care and other services (housing, NDIS, employment, justice), \$12-\$39 billion in lost productivity (lower employment and absenteeism), \$15 billion in informal care (provided by family and friends), and \$151 billion in reduced life expectancy (QMHC, 2022). Nationally, \$11.6 billion dollars was spent on mental health in 2020-2021 by the federal government. Of this amount, \$1.6 billion was spent on medicare-related mental health expenses and \$635 million dollars was spent on prescription-related health expenses. In the same year, \$1.35 billion was spent by the Queensland government. No figures could be found on costs for the Hinkler region (Hervey Bay & Bundaberg), however, based on the federal government's per capita costs for Queensland (\$61), it can be estimated that approximately 12.8 million dollars is spent annually on medicare-related mental health costs for the region. Based on government expenditure of \$451 per person for mental health-related services in 2020-2021, it can be estimated approximately \$94.8 million is spent annually in Hinkler for mental health-related services.



Source: [Expenditure - Mental health - AIHW \(2023f\)](#)



4. Specific Groups

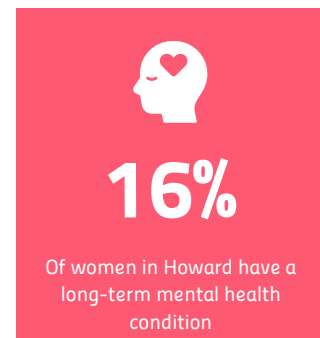
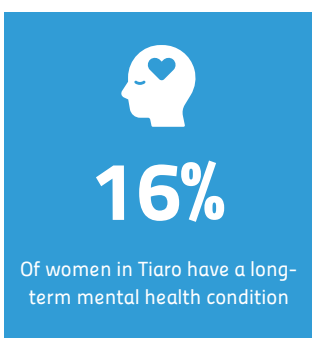
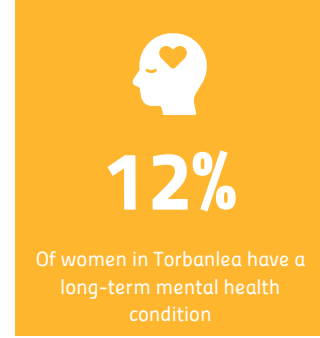
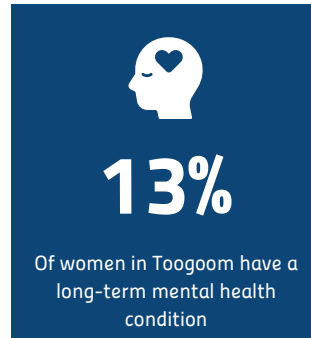
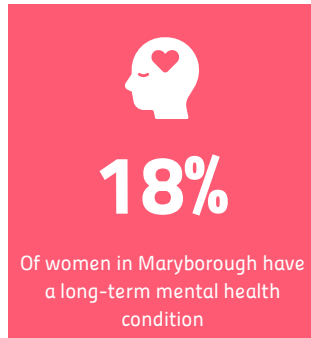
Who is more at risk of developing mental health issues?



4.1 Female Mental Health Snapshot

Women in Maryborough have the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions on the Fraser Coast.

Based on ABS 2021 census data, women on the Fraser Coast and Hinkler have higher incidence of long-term mental health conditions compared to Queensland (11%) and Australian rates (11%). Maryborough had very high incidence of long-term mental health conditions among women (18%), followed by Howard and Tiaro (16%) and Bauple (15%). Anxiety and depression are the top burdens of disease for women 15-44 (AIHW, 2022b) with approximately 45% of Australian females have experienced mental health issues during their lifetime (AIHW, 2023a). Beyond Blue states a number of factors affect women’s mental health primarily including caring roles, domestic and family violence, sexual assault, gender or sexuality discrimination, infertility, miscarriage and infant loss, pregnancy and perinatal, and menopause. In 2021-2022 Australian females were more likely to see a mental health professional (20.6%) than males (12.3%) (ABS, 2022c).

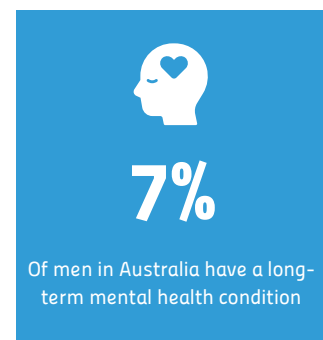
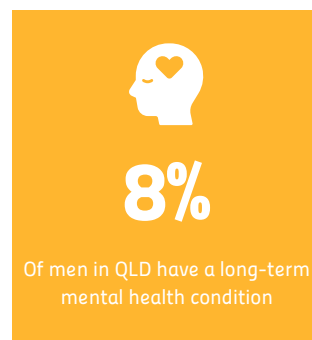
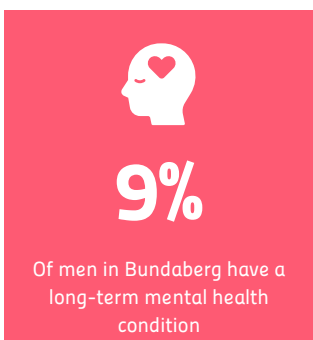
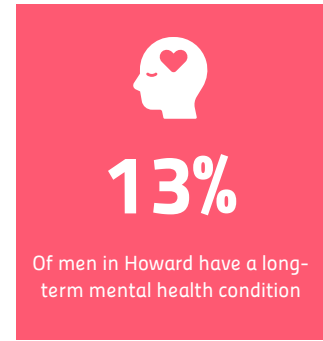
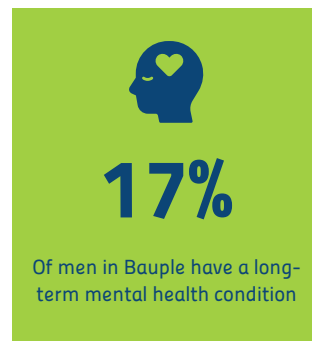
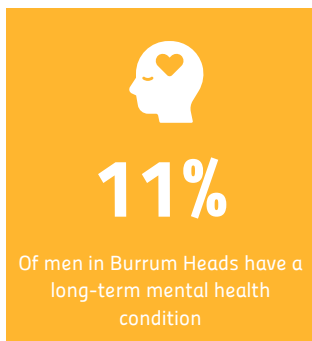
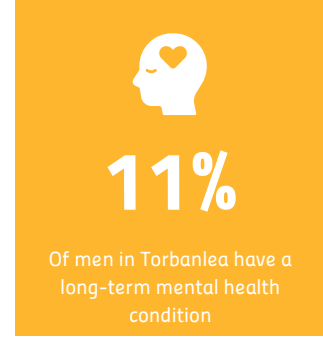
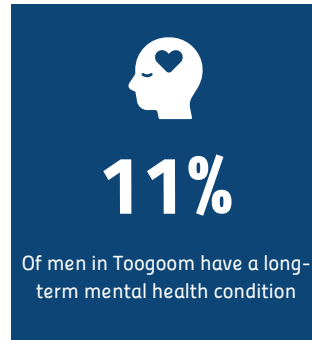
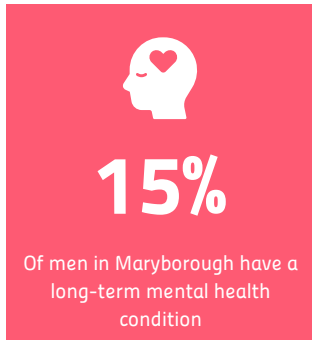


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

4.2 Male Mental Health Snapshot

Men in Bauple have the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions on the Fraser Coast.

Men on the Fraser Coast and Hinkler have higher rates of long-term mental health conditions (including depression or anxiety) than Queensland (8%) and Australian rates (7%) according to ABS 2021 census data. Overall 11% of men on the Fraser Coast reported a long-term mental health condition. Within the Fraser Coast, men in Bauple had very high incidence of long-term mental health conditions (17%), followed by Maryborough (15%), Tiaro (14%) and Howard (13%). Suicide and self-harm are the top two burdens of disease for Australian males aged between 15 and 44 (AIHW, 2023b), with men 3 times more likely to die from suicide than women (Australian Government, 2023). Approximately 43% of Australian males have experienced a mental health issue during their lifetime (AIHW, 2023b), however, Australian men are less likely to see a mental health professional (12.3%) than females (20.6%) (ABS, 2022c).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

4.3 First Nations Mental Health Snapshot

First Nations people in Bauple and Tiaro have the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions on the Fraser Coast.

According to the 2021 census, 18% of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people on the Fraser Coast have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). In Hinkler, 12% of First Nations people have a long-term mental health condition. This is higher than Queensland and Australia rates (both 18%). Within Fraser Coast, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders in Bauple (43%) and Tiaro (33%) experience extremely high incidence of long-term mental health conditions among small populations. The most common mental health disorders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are anxiety (17%), followed by depression (13%) (ABS, 2019b). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lower access to mental health services and supports, despite having a greater need (Australian Government, 2017). Barriers to accessing services and supports include culturally appropriate, competent and safe care, cost, availability and access (Australian Government, 2017). Factors affecting First Nations mental health include historical & intergenerational trauma, impacts of the Stolen Generations and removal of children, systemic racism, discrimination, and economic and social disadvantage (Queensland Mental Health Commission).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

4.4 Youth Mental Health Snapshot

Youth in Burrum Heads, Bauple & Tiaro had the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions on Fraser Coast.

According to 2021 census data, 15% of youth 15-24 on the Fraser Coast and 14% of youth in Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). This is higher than Queensland rates (12%) and Australia (11%). Anxiety and depression were both in the top 5 burdens of disease for children 0 to 14 in Australia in 2018 (AIHW, 2022a), with adolescents more likely to experience a severe mental health disorder than young children (Goodsell et al., 2017). Youth aged between 15 and 24 were the most likely to see a mental health professional for support (21.1%) (ABS, 2022c). According to the Fraser Coast Youth Survey 2023, 36% of youth 12-18 years old reported using mental health services including 69% accessing support for anxiety, 53% for depression and 49% for stress.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.



4.5 LGBTIQ+ Mental Health Snapshot

There is a gap of available data on mental health for LGBTIQ+ people in Fraser Coast and Hinkler.

Due to the fact census data does not collect LGBTIQ+ information, no data was available for the Fraser Coast and Hinkler around LGBTIQ+ mental health. However, there is a substantial body of research that shows LGBTIQ+ communities experience higher rates of depression and anxiety than the general population (Hill et al., 2020). Mental health conditions are also the lead long-term health condition for Australians in same-sex relationships (ABS, 2022d). The National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing (2022c) 2020-2022 shows nearly half of people (44.7%) who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community experienced a 12-month anxiety disorder (ABS, 2022) and that those in same sex relationships experience mental health issues (16%) at near double rates of all couples in Australia (8.2%) (ABS, 2022d).




44.7%

of people from the LGBTIQ+ community experienced a 12-month anxiety disorder



16%

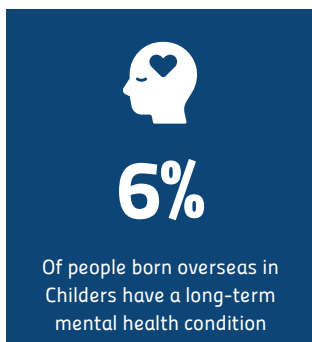
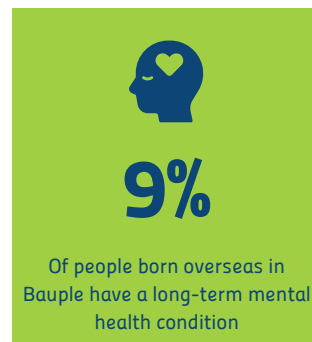
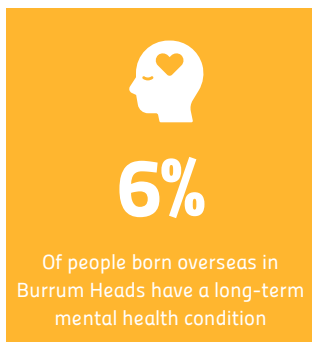
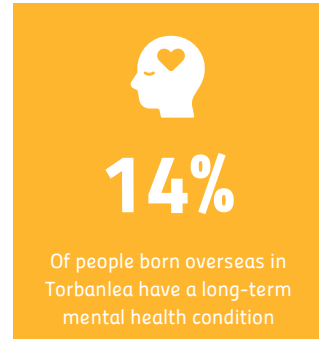
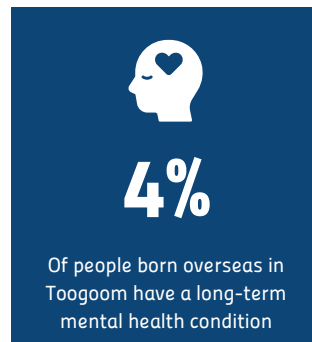
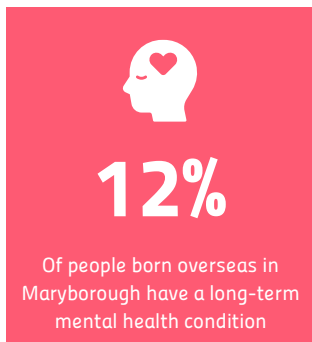
of people in same-sex relationship experience health issues at double rate of other couples



4.6 CALD Mental Health Snapshot

Those born overseas in Hinkler and Fraser Coast experience high rates of long term mental health conditions.

According to 2021 census data, 10% of Fraser Coast and 8% of Bundaberg people born overseas have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). This is higher than Queensland rate (6%) and Australia (5.5%). Within Fraser Coast, smaller populations in Tiaro, Howard and Torbanlea experience much higher rates of long-term mental health conditions. The National Study on Mental Health and Wellbeing states that while data presents Australians born overseas as less likely to experience a mental health disorder, migrants and CALD people face barriers that increase the risk of mental health conditions and reduced access in obtaining a mental health diagnosis (ABS, 2022). Beyond Blue further highlights that immigrant and refugee populations are at higher risk of severe mental illness and tend to access mental health services through clinical emergency services at a severe, or crisis stage of their condition, which drastically diminishes their recovery prospects (Beyond Blue, n.d.).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

4.7 Disability Mental Health

People with a core need for assistance in Howard, Maryborough and Bauple have high rates of long-term mental health conditions.

According to 2021 census data, 35% of Fraser Coast residents with a core activity need for assistance had a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). In Bundaberg, 32% of residents with a core activity need for assistance had a long-term mental health condition. Fraser Coast experienced higher levels than the rest of Queensland (32%) and Australia (29%). Within Fraser Coast, Bauple, Maryborough and Howard residents experienced the highest incidence. Mental health or behavioural disorders are the main conditions for approximately 23,3% of people with a disability (ABS, 2019a) nationally. The most common mental health and behavioural disorders for Australian people with a disability include “psychoses, mood disorders, intellectual and developmental disorders, neurotic, stress related and somatoform disorders” (ABS, 2019a). Barriers to seeking healthcare for people with a disability include stigma and discrimination, physical barriers, access to services, communication barriers, out of pocket costs for services, feelings of fear, shame and denial (Queensland Government, 2023b).

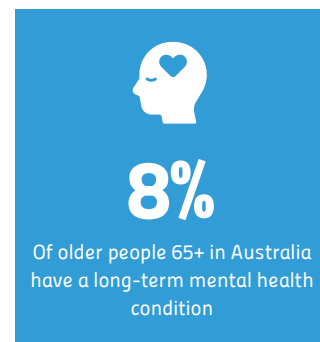
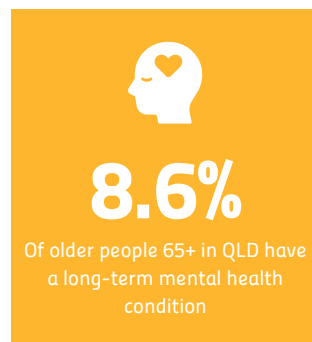
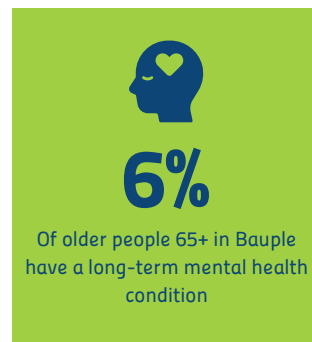
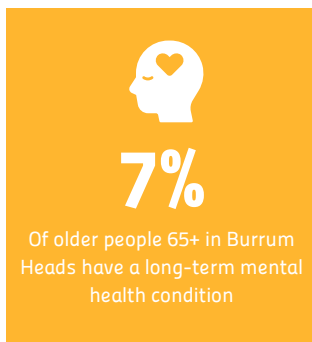
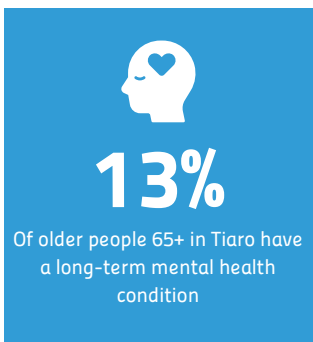
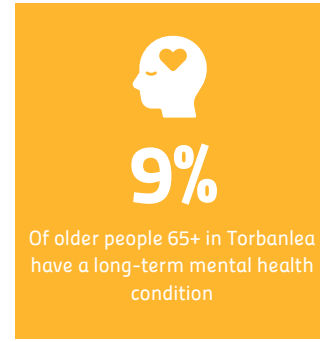
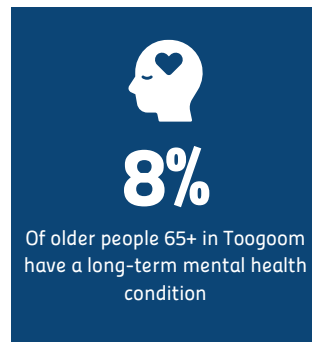


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

4.8 Seniors Mental Health Snapshot

Older people in Fraser Coast and Hinkler experience higher levels of long-term mental health conditions than Queensland and Australia.

ABS 2021 census data shows 10% of older people 65+ in the Fraser Coast and 9% of older people in Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). The regions have a slightly higher rate than Queensland (8.6%) and Australia (8%). Within Fraser Coast, Tiaro, Maryborough and Howard had the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions among seniors. Though percentages are low mental health conditions among seniors should not be discounted as older people are the least likely to seek professional mental health support (ABS, 2022c). Stigma surrounds mental health and some older people view mental illness as a weakness, instead of a health condition (Beyond Blue, n.d.). This can lead to feelings being suppressed, not being spoken about, and help only being sought at times of crisis. At the same time, seniors are more likely to experience grief, loss and physical illness, which increases chances of depression (Beyond Blue, n.d.). It should also be noted that these rates contrast with the rate of depression among people living in residential aged-care care, approximately 35% (QMHC, 2022).

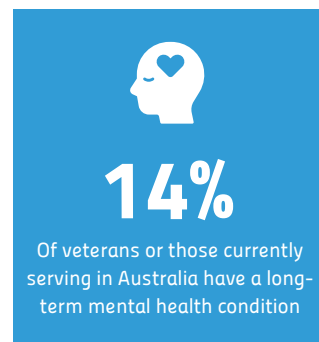
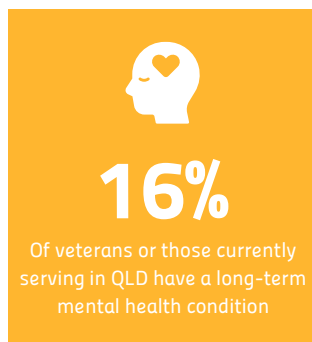
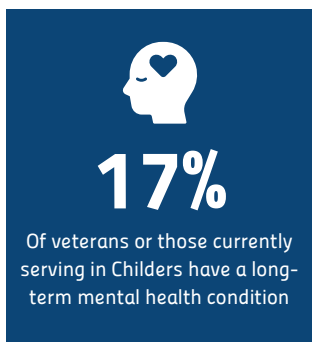
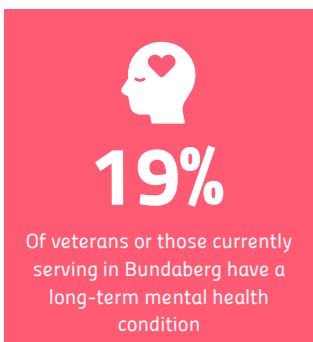
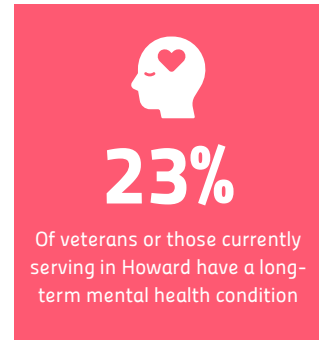
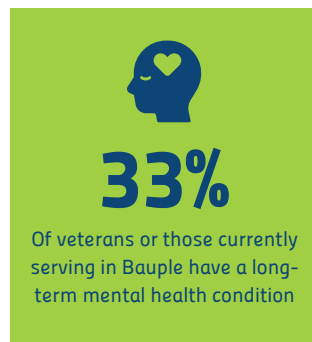
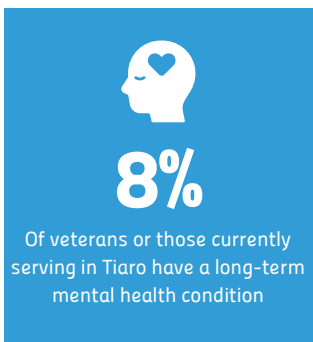
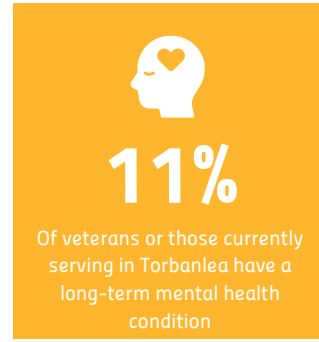
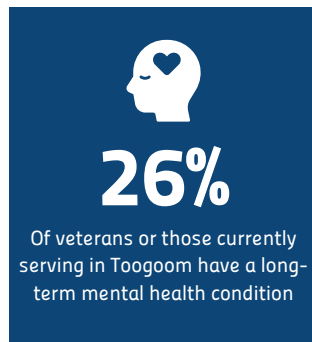
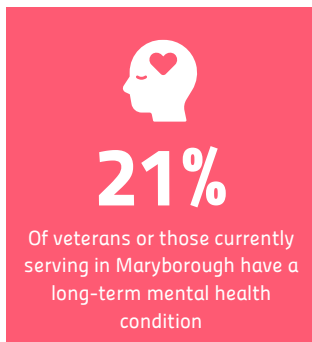
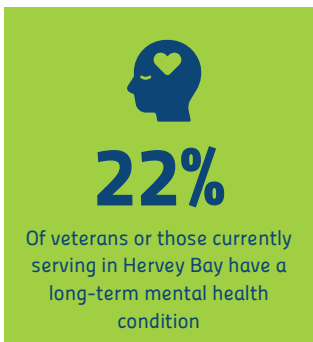


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

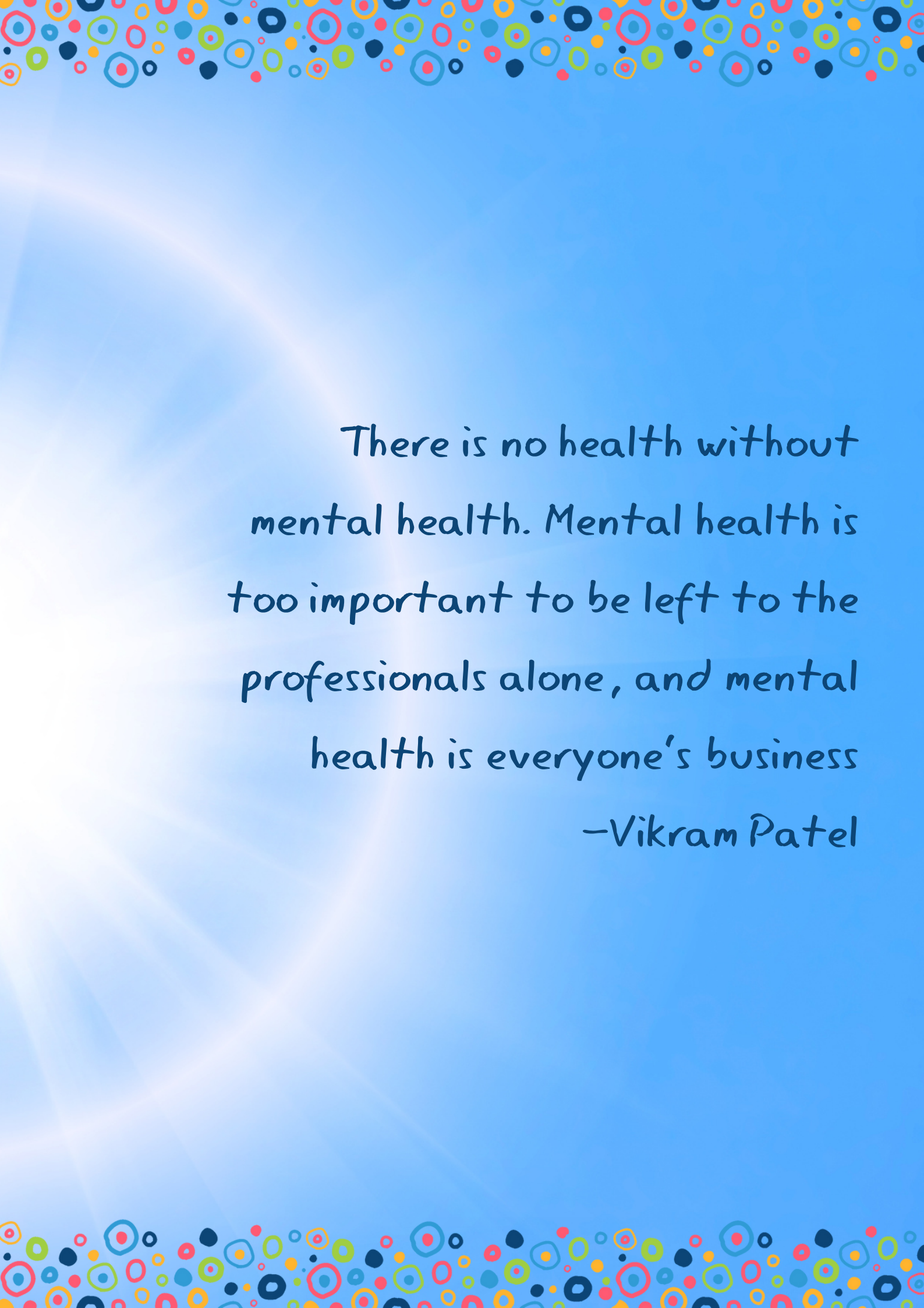
4.9 ADF Mental Health Snapshot

Those serving in the ADF and veterans in the Fraser Coast and Hinkler experience high incidence of long-term mental health conditions.

According to 2021 census data, 22% of veterans those currently serving in the Fraser Coast and 19% in Bundaberg had a long-term mental health condition (including depression or anxiety). This is much higher than Queensland rates (16%) and Australia (14%). Within the Fraser Coast, Bauple, Toogoom, Howard and Hervey Bay have the highest incidence. Nationally, the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that 3 out of 4 of people who have transitioned out of the Australian Defence Force have met the diagnostic criteria for a mental disorder at some point during their life (Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), 2018), with the lifetime mental disorders most commonly found being anxiety (46.1%) and alcohol disorders (47.5%) (DVA, 2018). Veterans will experience unique events during their time in the defence force which may include operational deployment, and at times life or death situations. Service is often linked to a strong sense of identity and belonging and it can also be a significant change and adjustment from military to civilian life (Open Arms, n.d. b).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

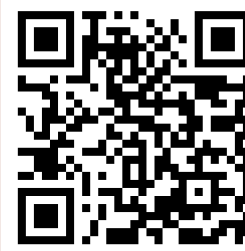


There is no health without
mental health. Mental health is
too important to be left to the
professionals alone, and mental
health is everyone's business
-Vikram Patel

Showcase

Fraser Coast Mates

[LEARN MORE](#)



Fraser Coast Mates was formed in 2018 by a group of local business people who were concerned by the rise of debilitating mental health issues and rising suicide rates across our region.

The group is a local organisation on the Fraser Coast that aims to build local awareness and grow conversations about mental wellbeing by bridging the gap between those suffering and the local support services available and ultimately making progress for suicide prevention.

Their number one goal is to encourage mates to be better equipped to help their mates and colleagues in times of struggle by telling local stories, helping mates gain clarity around what services are available locally and coordinating community events.

Fraser Coast Mates hosts a range of events across the Fraser Coast region, along with providing resources such as the Little Black Book and free counselling sessions to those in need.





5. Social Determinants

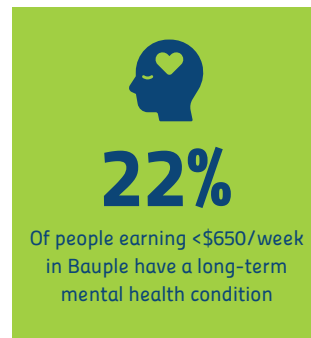
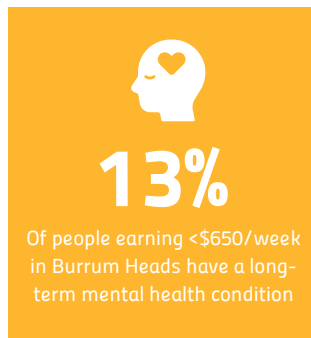
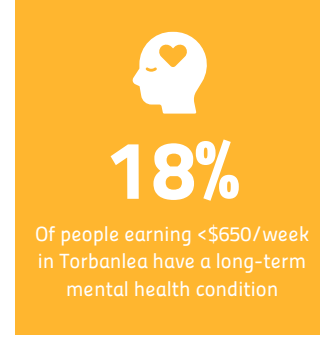
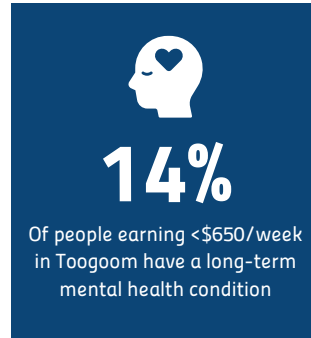
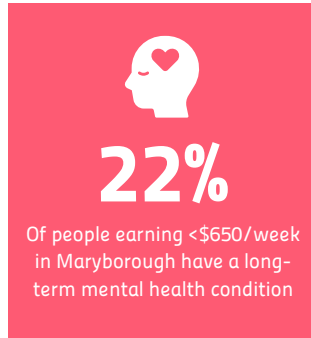
What life factors contribute to mental health issues?



5.1 Socioeconomic Disadvantage

People in Maryborough, Tiaro and Bauple are most affected by socioeconomic disadvantage and long-term mental health conditions

According to 2021 census data, 17% of people in the Fraser Coast and Bundaberg earning less than \$650 per week also had a long-term mental health condition. This is was higher than Queensland rates (15%) and Australia (14%). Within Fraser Coast, Maryborough, Tiaro and Bauple had the highest incidence of long-term mental health conditions among those earning less than \$650 per week. In particular, Fraser Coast is one of the most disadvantaged areas in Australia (in the top 11%). People living in more disadvantaged areas are disproportionately affected by mental health conditions (Broerse et al., 2021). The National Study on Mental Health and Wellbeing notes that Australians living in a disadvantaged area were more likely to experience a 12 month mental health condition, compared with people living in an advantaged area (22.6% compared with 20.4%). Particularly, people experiencing financial challenges are twice as likely to be experiencing mental health challenges as those who are not experiencing financial challenges while people experiencing mental health challenges are twice as likely as those who are not to also be experiencing financial challenges (Heartword Strategic, 2022). Financial indicators relating to mental health include worsening of finances, unpaid bills, lack of emergency funds, material deprivation, and poorer perceived financial prosperity (Heartword Strategic, 2022).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

5.2 Unemployment

Unemployed people in Fraser Coast and Hinkler experience high incidence of long-term mental health conditions compared to those employed

According to 2021 census data, 22% of unemployed people in the Fraser Coast and Bundaberg have a long-term mental health condition. This is higher than Queensland rates (18%) and Australia (16%). Within the regions, Childers (37%), Maryborough (27%) and Howard (27%) experienced the highest incidence. Not having a job, or enough work, can affect mental wellbeing and impact physical health, relationships, and sense of identity (Beyond Blue, n.d.). Alternatively, the positive impact of employment participation (as well as financial security) on mental health is well established (Broerse et al., 2021). This is clearly reflected in comparing the incidence of long-term mental health conditions of unemployed with those who are employed across the regions below.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.

5.3 Homelessness

There is a lack of local available data on people experiencing homelessness and the incidence of long-term mental health conditions.

No local data showing how many people living in improvised dwellings had a long-term mental health condition was found. However there is much evidence of the links between homelessness and mental health disorders. The relationship between housing, homelessness, mental illness and problematic AOD use is strongly interrelated, highly complex and bi-directional. Access to safe, secure, and affordable housing remains a significant contributing factor to keeping people well, preventing mental ill-health and promoting long-term recovery (QMHC, 2022). According to the ABS, people who have experienced housing insecurity have more likely had a Mood Affective disorder (17%), than people who have not (6.4%) (ABS, 2022). Mental health issues are also one of the key reasons of homelessness (Mission Australia, n.d.) with 31% of people who receive specialist homelessness services having a mental health issue (AIHW, 2023c). People experiencing mental ill-health, have many difficulties and barriers to accessing and navigating both housing and mental health systems without appropriate support, and are often required to balance their mental health needs and their housing needs due to the incompatibility of the two systems (QMHC, 2022).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.



5.4 Substance Misuse

There is a gap in available local data on mental health and AOD use

No local data for Fraser Coast or Hinkler was found showing how many people who have an addiction also have a long-term mental health disorder, however, there is a complex relationship between mental health and AOD use. A mental illness may make a person more likely to use substances to provide short-term relief from their symptoms, while other people have drug problems that may trigger the first symptoms of mental illness. For example, if someone has a predisposition to schizophrenia, the use of illicit drugs may trigger the first episode in what can be a lifelong mental illness (AIHW, 2020).

In terms of AOD prevalence, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare states people with mental health issues are 1.7 times more likely to have used an illicit substance recently, than people without mental health issues (AIHW, 2023d) and that risky levels of drinking are higher in people with mental health issues or higher levels of psychological distress (AIHW, 2023e). Additionally, while the prevalence of smoking is declining in the overall community across Australia, it remains higher among people with mental illness. Compared to both the overall population and to people without mental illness, people with recent mental illness have higher smoking rates, higher levels of nicotine dependence, and a disproportionate health and financial burden from smoking (Cancer Council Victoria, 2019).

AOD use and mental health illness also affect different demographics differently. For example, the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing showed approximately one third of Australian women with a diagnosis of PTSD also met criteria for a substance use disorder (Chapman et al., 2012).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023.



5.5 Physical Health & Co-morbidity

There is a lack of available local data on how many people experiencing a long-term health condition also have a long-term mental health condition

No local census data on how many people experiencing a long-term health condition also had a long-term mental health condition was found. However, 2021 census data did reveal how many people experienced co-morbidity of long-term health conditions in general as presented below. The Fraser Coast and Hinkler experience much higher rates of co-morbidity than the Queensland rate (29%) and Australia (28%). Additionally, Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) 2019 data showed Bundaberg and Fraser Coast residents with mental health disorders experienced higher age standardised rates (ASR) with most co-morbidities. Data has not been updated since 2019, however. Australian research also shows a person with co-occurring diseases or disorders is likely to experience more severe and chronic medical, social and emotional problems than if they had a single disease or disorder (ABS, 2022). On average, people living with severe mental illness also die approximately 10 to 15 years earlier, often due to comorbidity issues (QMHC, 2022).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021.



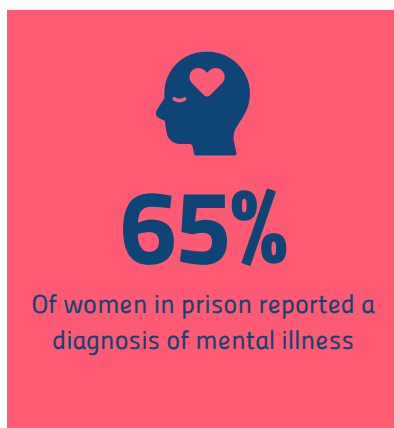
5.6 Crime & Mental Health

No local available data around the justice system and mental health was found for the Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions.

No local available data around the justice system and incidence of mental health disorders was found for the regions, however, Australian research shows that while most people with a mental illness, including those with major illnesses, do not commit crimes, people with mental illness are over-represented in the criminal justice system (Senate Select Committee on Mental Health, 2006). People in contact with the justice system are more likely to have a mental illness than people in the broader population (Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2022). People living with mental illness are over-represented in the prison system primarily because of the complex interaction between mental illness and a variety of factors such as disrupted family backgrounds, family violence, abuse, use of drugs and alcohol, and unstable housing. The National Prisoner Health Data Collection from 2018 found that 65 per cent of women and 35 per cent of men in prison reported a previous diagnosis of a mental illness, including AOD use disorders (Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2022).

Mental disorders among non-incarcerated offenders is also increasingly recognised as an issue of concern at various points in the criminal justice system with research in Brisbane showing that almost 80 percent of men and 85 percent of women were substance dependent. Using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) to screen for likely mental disorders (excluding substance-related disorders) the researchers found that almost all women and most of the men were assessed as likely to be experiencing a mental disorder (Forsythe, Lubica & Gaffney, Antonette, 2012).

Research has also found that generally, more than half of the children detained in youth justice centres are known to child protection services and have a history of traumatic experiences with children in youth justice in Queensland estimated to have high levels of mental ill-health (Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2022).



Source: Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2022



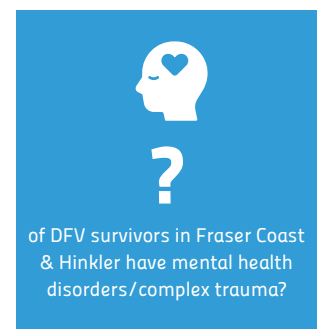


5.7 Domestic & Family Violence

No local available data was found on incidence of DFV and mental health for Fraser Coast and Hinkler.

No local available data was found on the incidence of people who have experienced domestic and family violence (DFV) and mental health for the Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions, however, the link between DFV and negative health impacts, including poor mental health and mental illness are well-known from national research. Many studies have pointed to negative and often long-term mental health consequences of domestic violence for survivors. These impacts extend to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress and other disorders, substance abuse to self medicate, and suicide (Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2013). Statistics from the Personal Safety Survey report for 2021-22, show that one in four women and one in eight men experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member (Phoenix Australia, 2023). A 2011 study found that of a nationally representative sample of 1218 Australian women who had experienced gender-based violence (i.e. partner violence, rape, other forms of sexual assault and stalking), 77% experienced anxiety disorders, 52% mood disorders, 47% substance use disorders, 56% post-traumatic stress disorder and 35% had attempted suicide (Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2013). Twenty-five per cent of DFV survivors in Australia also have complex trauma which is not readily recognised when they access mental health and other trauma services (DVConnect Submission to The Queensland Parliament Mental Health Select Committee, 2022). Those experiencing DFV may experience being prohibited from help seeking behaviour, prevented from medication compliance or using it coercively, self-medication, and being subjected to gaslighting behaviour. Children, too, demonstrate mental health effects from being exposed to or from directly experiencing violence in the home, including depression, PTSD, anxiety disorders, and emotional problems (Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2013).

There is also a significant overlap between poor mental health and people who use violence (PUV). A considerable proportion of men who use violence have complex trauma backgrounds (DVConnect Submission to The Queensland Parliament Mental Health Select Committee, 2022).





5.8 Social Isolation & Loneliness

A disproportionately high number of people in the Fraser Coast and Hinkler feel socially isolated from the local community

Social isolation and loneliness are experiences of disconnection from others. People experiencing social isolation are more likely to have higher levels of distress and mental ill-health. Additionally, mental ill-health can affect the quality of relationships, which can contribute to social isolation and impede recovery (Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2022). Links between social isolation and loneliness, and mental health are increasingly being studied with studies showing identified differences in brain areas associated with loneliness. In lonely young adults, areas of the brain related to social cognition and empathy have less dense white matter (a large network of nerve fibres that allows the exchange of information and communication between different areas of your brain). But in lonely older adults, brain regions important for cognitive processing and emotional regulation are actually smaller in volume (Nakagawa et al., 2015; Düzel et al., 2019).

HBNC conducted Wellbeing Surveys with general community throughout October-November 2023 in the Fraser Coast and Bundaberg, with one part of the survey asking how connected people felt to their local community. Fraser Coast residents felt an average 5.2 out of 10 (on a 1-10 scale). Over half (62%) felt an average to very poor connection to the local community compared to 38% who rated their connection good to great. Bundaberg residents felt an average 4.7 out of 10 with 73% rating their connection to community average to very poor compared to 27% who rated their connection good to great. According to the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2020-21, 15.5% of Australians 16-85 years old, felt lonely within the last month (ABS, 2022). Alternatively, 86.9% of Australians felt (good, very good or excellent) connected with a group or their local community (ABS, 2022).



38%

of Fraser Coast residents rate their connection with local community good to great



27%


of Bundaberg residents rate their connections with local community good to great

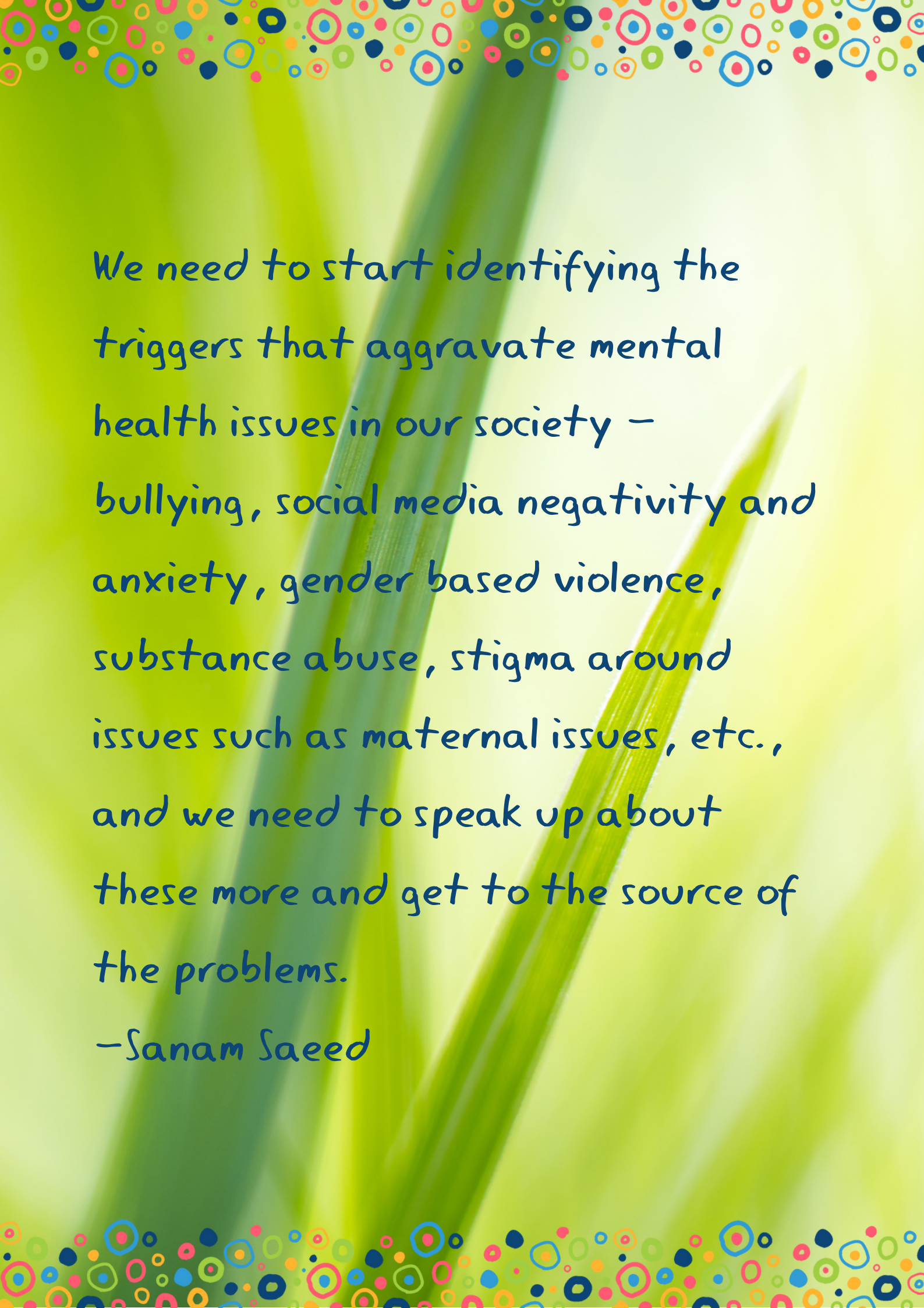


86.9%

of Australians rate their connection with a group or local community good to excellent

Sources: Fraser Coast Wellbeing Survey 2023, Bundaberg Wellbeing Survey 2023, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022)



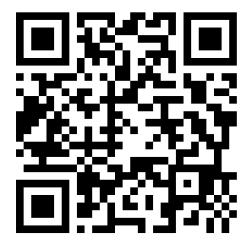


We need to start identifying the triggers that aggravate mental health issues in our society – bullying, social media negativity and anxiety, gender based violence, substance abuse, stigma around issues such as maternal issues, etc., and we need to speak up about these more and get to the source of the problems.

–Sanam Saeed

Showcase

[LEARN MORE](#)



Smiling Mind Mental Health App

Smiling Mind is a free app that helps young people to pro-actively look after their wellbeing and mental health. Smiling Mind's mission is to provide accessible, life-long tools to support healthy minds.

The Australia-based and developed app allows people to practice daily meditation and mindfulness from any device and is 100% evidence based. It is based on the premise that mindfulness is proven to lead to better attention, memory, regulation of emotions and self awareness. In turn, improvements in these areas can lead to reduced stress, anxiety and depression, better academic skills, social skills and self esteem.

Developed with teachers, psychologists and health professionals, the app has a series of bitesize, simple meditation modules for children, teachers and parents. The structure of the app's content is intentionally flexible so teachers are able to decide how and when to bring mindfulness into the classroom. The app can also be used by anyone at home also.

Smiling Mind was named #1 Apple Health & Wellbeing App 2018 – Australia and has been downloaded over 8.3 million times.





6. Mental Health Conditions

What kinds of mental health issues are people experiencing?

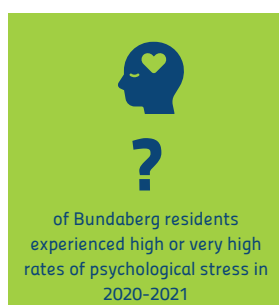


6.1 Psychological Distress

No current data was found on rates of psychological distress in the Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions

No current data was found the Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions around the rates of psychological distress. Subsequently no comparisons can be made with Queensland and Australian data from 2020-2022. Psychological distress is emotional suffering that is considered temporary and refers to non-specific symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression (Viertiö et al, 2021, p. 1). It can impact wellbeing, relationships, work productivity and quality of life (Belay et al., 2021). Psychological distress is often associated not only with poor mental health outcomes but also with poorer physical health outcomes.

According to the Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU), 12% of Fraser Coast residents and 10% of Bundaberg residents scored high or very high for psychological distress on the Kessler 10 Scale (K10) in 2017-2018 (PHIDU, 2023). No updated data was available since 2018. Approximately 18.9% of Queenslanders aged between 16 and 85 experienced high to very high rates of psychological distress in 2020-2022 (ABS, 2022). Queenslanders aged between 18 and 24 in 2017-2018 were the age group most likely to report high / very high levels of psychological distress compared with all other age groups (ABS, 2018). This was consistent for both females and males (ABS, 2018). Nationally, 15% of Australians experienced high or very high levels of psychological stress in 2020-21. More women (19%) experienced high or very high levels of psychological stress than men (12%). In terms of age, 20% of 16-34 year olds experienced high or very high levels of psychological stress compared to 9% of those aged 65-85 years old (ABS, 2022). For youth, 19.9% of all young people (11 to 17 years) had high or very high levels of psychological distress in the previous 12 months, however for females aged 16 to 17 years (36.2%) and young people with major depressive disorder (8.07%), this was significantly higher (Beyond Blue, n.d.).



6.2 Mental Health Conditions

No local data on incidence of specific types of mental health disorders was found for Fraser Coast or Hinkler.

No local data on the incidence of specific types of mental health disorders experienced was found for the Fraser Coast or Hinkler. However, a summary of types of conditions and Australian data is included below.

Anxiety

Anxiety is when anxious feelings don't go away and may not have a clear cause. Anxiety is a serious condition that makes it hard for a person to cope with daily life. The constant worrying can make it hard to work, study or see friends and family. 1 in 4 people experience anxiety within their lifetime.

Social Anxiety

Social anxiety disorder (also called social phobia) is when someone has an intense fear of being criticised, embarrassed or humiliated. This fear can happen even in everyday situations, such as eating in front of others or talking to people. Around 7% of Australians have social anxiety.



Generalised Anxiety Disorder

Generalised anxiety disorder is when someone feels anxious on most days. 28.8% Australians have experienced anxiety disorder in their lifetime.



Panic Disorder

Panic disorder is when panic attacks are recurrent and disabling. Around 5% of Australians experience panic disorder within their lifetime. It can develop at any age but is rare in children and seniors.

Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia is when you fear having a panic attack in a place or situation that is difficult to escape from or where help may not be available. Most people develop agoraphobia as part of an anxiety or panic disorder. Around 4.6% of Australians have agoraphobia.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive compulsive disorder is when someone has ongoing unwanted or intrusive thoughts and fears that cause anxiety. They may use rituals or repetitive behaviours. For example, a fear of germs can lead to constant washing. Around 3% of Australians experience OCD within their lifetime.

Depression

Depression affects how you feel about yourself. It can make life more difficult to manage from day to day. Symptoms include losing interest in things you usually enjoy, lack of energy, trouble sleeping or sleeping more than usual. Some people feel irritable and some find it hard to concentrate. Depression affects 1 in 7 people in Australia.

Major Depression

Also known as: clinical depression, depression, unipolar depression. Major depression is when you feel sad, down or miserable most of the time. Types of major depression include melancholia, psychotic and antenatal or postnatal. Around 1 in 6 Australians experience major depression in their lifetime.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is when you experience periods of depression and periods of mania, with periods of normal mood in between. It affects around 2% of Australians and can be difficult to diagnose. It appears to be most closely linked to family history. Stress and conflict can trigger periods of depression or mania.

6.2 Mental Health Conditions Cont.



Persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia)

Dysthymia is long-term depression which lasts at least 2 years. It has similar symptoms to major depression, but is less severe.

PTSD

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is when you feel intense fear, helplessness or horror after a traumatic event like war, assault, accident or disaster. Symptoms can include difficulty relaxing, upsetting dreams or flashbacks of the event, and avoidance of anything related to the event. Around 6% of Australians have PTSD.

Antenatal Depression & Anxiety

Antenatal depression & anxiety is depression & anxiety that happens during pregnancy. Symptoms are similar to other times in life. However, they're complicated by the hormonal & lifestyle changes of pregnancy. 1 in 5 women & 1 in 10 fathers/partners experience anxiety, depression, or both during pregnancy and/or following birth.

Psychotic Depression

Psychotic depression is when a person loses touch with reality or experiences psychosis. Symptoms of psychotic depression can include hallucinations, delusions and paranoia. About 1 in 200 Australians will experience psychotic illness each year.



Melancholia

Melancholia is severe depression which often has physical symptoms including moving slowly, feeling sad, down and miserable, and being completely unable to enjoy anything.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are characterised by problems associated with disordered eating or body weight control, and a severe concern with body weight or shape. 4% of Australians have an eating disorder. Of these, 3% have anorexia, 12% bulimia, 47% binge eating disorder (BED) and 38% other eating disorders.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

SAD is a mood disorder that has a seasonal pattern. The most common type of SAD is when people feel depressed in the winter and better in the lighter/warmer months. SAD is thought to be related to the variation in light exposure in different seasons. SAD is rare in Australia.

Specific Phobias

A specific phobia is when a person is irrationally scared of specific situations or things. Fear of spiders (arachnophobia), fear of small spaces (claustrophobia) and fear of heights (acrophobia) are common phobias. Some phobias are more debilitating than others. Around 11% of Australians have a specific phobia.

Cyclothymic Disorder

Cyclothymic disorder is similar to bipolar disorder but less severe. It's a long-term condition lasting for at least 2 years. People with cyclothymia have periods of mania and depression that are milder and shorter. About 0.4% of Australians have cyclothymia which usually begins in adolescence or early adulthood and is lifelong.

6.3 Mental Health & Self-harm

The Central Queensland, Wide Bay & Sunshine Coast PHN region had the second highest rate of intentional self-harm hospitalisations in Australia in 2015-2016

Self-harm refers to a person intentionally causing pain or damage to their own body. This behaviour may be motivated as a way of expressing or controlling distressing feelings or thoughts. Self-harm and suicide are distinct and separate acts although some people who self-harm are at an increased risk of suicide (ABS, 2022). A higher rate of intentional self-harm among females is the opposite of what is seen in deaths by suicide, where rates are higher for males than for females (AIHW, n.d). No up-to-date self-harm data was found for the Fraser Coast and Hinkler, however, in 2015-2016, Central Queensland, Wide Bay & Sunshine Coast PHN region had the second highest rate (ASR 27 per 10,000) of intentional self-harm hospitalisations in Australia (AIHW, n.d). Northern Territory had the highest rate (ASR 29 per 10,000). In 2021-2022, Queensland had the highest proportion (31%), of hospitalisations due to intentional self-harm in Australia (AIHW, n.d). In 2020-2022, 8.7% of Australians aged 16-85 years had self-harmed in their lifetime and 1.7% had self-harmed in the previous 12 months. Females had higher rates of self-harm across their life time (10.4% compared with 6.8%). Amongst 16-24 years olds, more than one in four females (27.9%) had self-harmed in their lifetime (ABS, 2022).



31%

Of hospitalisations due to intentional self-harm in 2020-2022 were in Queensland



67%

Of people hospitalised for intentional self-harm in 2021-2022 in Australia were female



8.7%

Of Australians aged 16-85 have self-harmed in their lifetime



10.4%

Of females have self-harmed across their lifetime



6.8%

Of males have self-harmed across their lifetime



33%

Of LGBTIQ+ Australians have self-harmed in their lifetime



27.9%

Of female youth 16-24 have self-harmed in their lifetime



?

Of hospitalisations due to intentional self-harm occurred in Wide Bay in 2021-2022?

6.4 Mental Health & Suicide

6% of suicides between 2019–2021, were in the Wide Bay Hospital & Health Services Area, with 76% of those being males.

Suicide is a tragic death that occurs when a person voluntarily and intentionally ends their own life. Within Queensland, there were an estimated 2,342 deaths by suicide between 2019-2021 (QMHC, 2022). Of these, 140 (6%), were within the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service area (QMHC, 2022). Of this 140 people, 76% were males and 24% were females. The Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service area includes Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Childers, Biggenden, Gin Gin, Mt Perry, Gayndah, Monto, Eidsvold, Mundubbera and Miriam Vale. This is similar to Queensland rate for the same period, where 75% of suicides were males and 33% females (QMHC, 2022). Deaths by suicide in Queensland account for nearly a quarter (24.2% registered) of national deaths by suicide (QMHC, 2022). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people particularly experience high representations with suicide. In 2021, approximately 57 (7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide (QMHC, 2022). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience rates of suicide two times that of the Queensland population (QMHC, 2022). Suicide continues to be the leading cause of death for young Australians (Beyond Blue, n.d). Suicidal behaviour is complex, with many influencing factors. Dealing with stressful or traumatic past or present events, death, separation, loss, bullying, mental ill-health, alcohol and drugs can play a role in causing emotional pain. Other factors may include life-changing events, family history and relationships, work, education, and social pressures. Suicide can also have a profound emotional effect not only on family and friends, but on the whole community. The HBNC acknowledges the individuals, families and our local communities affected by suicide each year.



6%

Of suicides in Queensland in 2019-2021 were within the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service Area



76%

Of suicides in Wide Bay in 2019-2021 were males



24%

Of suicides in Wide Bay in 2019-2021 were females



24%

Of national registered deaths by suicide were in Queensland



7%

Of suicides in Queensland were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



8%

Of suicides in Queensland were people who were non-English speaking backgrounds and region/country of birth



25%

Of suicides in Queensland were people who were unemployed



53%

Of suicides in Queensland were people who had a diagnosed mental health condition



Shouting "self-care" at
people who actually
need "community care" is
how we fail people
-Nakita Valerio



Showcase

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Men's Walk & Talk Hervey Bay

Men's Walk & Talk Hervey Bay is a registered charity group with the aim to promote and support men's physical, social and mental health through physical activities and social interaction.

The group hosts regular walks and social events along with active participation and support of community and charitable events.

Men who have completed 5 walks with the group are formally invited to join the group with membership being free of cost.

The group also run their own podcast with each episode featuring a catch up with someone who has joined the group for a walk, share their story and inspire others to come along and join the Men's Walk & Talk Hervey Bay.



Tuesday Afternoon Walk - 5:15pm



Meet down in the park beside the Hervey Bay Surf Life Saving Club by 5:15 pm for a 1 hour walk down past the Beach House Hotel return.

Thursday Morning Walk - 6am



Meet down in the park beside the Hervey Bay Surf Life Saving Club by 6:00 am for a 1 hour walk to the Urangan Pier return.



MEN'S WALK & TALK
HERVEY BAY
SUPPORTING MEN'S HEALTH & WELL-BEING





7. Mental Health Supports

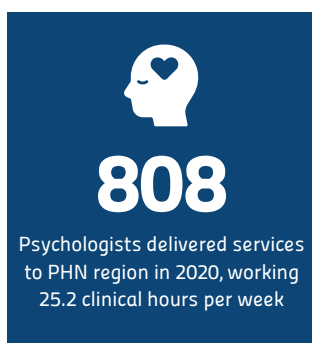
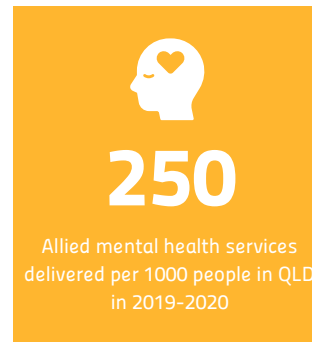
What are people doing about mental health?



7.1 Professional Support

A total 1,646 professionals delivered support to the PHN region in 2019-2020

PHN-Primary Health Network (Now Country 2 Coast) reports that in 2019-2020, medicare-subsidised allied mental health services delivered 226 services (per 1,000 people) in Hervey Bay, 221 in Maryborough and 172 in Bundaberg (PHN Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast, 2021). Services uptake was lower than Queensland rate (250 services per 1,000) and Australia (240 services per 1,000). For the same period, medicare-subsidised psychiatric mental health services delivered 116 services (per 1,000 people) in Bundaberg, 91 in Maryborough and 88 in Hervey Bay. Psychiatric services uptake was lower than Queensland (117 services per 1,000 people), and Australia (99 services per 1,000 people) (PHN Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast, 2021). In 2019-20, 9.3 per cent (474,697 people) of the population in Queensland, received Medicare-subsidised mental health-specific services provided by general practitioners. Approximately 2.2 per cent (111,045 people) of the Queensland population received a Medicare-subsidised mental health service provided by a clinical psychologist. Queensland is ranked third lowest when compared to other jurisdictions. There was also 3.3 per cent (168,223 people) who received a Medicare-subsidised mental health service provided by 'other psychologists'. This is higher than the national average of 2.9 per cent (PHN Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast, 2021).



Source: AIHW n.d; PHN Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast, 2021

7.2 Hospital Support

A total 4,779 people were provided with hospital mental health services in 2022-23 by Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service

The Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (covering Fraser Coast & Hinkler) annual report for 2022-2023 states there were 4,779 people provided with mental health care services. Of these, 71.5% received follow up by community mental health within 1-7 days following discharge from an acute mental health inpatient unit. 8.8% experienced re-admissions to acute psychiatric care within 28 days of discharge. Ambulatory mental health services provided 33,615 contact duration (hours). Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) has also advanced the Fraser Coast Mental Health Service project, which involves building a new 22-bed acute mental health inpatient unit at Hervey Bay and refurbishment of the existing 14-bed Maryborough inpatient unit into a 10-bed specialist sub-acute unit for older persons, increasing mental health capacity in the Fraser Coast by 18 beds. The WBHHS has also extended the operating hours and referral pathways of the Fraser Coast Oasis Crisis Support Space, to support more people experiencing mental health distress (WBHHS, 2023). In 2021-2022, mental health presentations at emergency departments represented 3% of all presentations (AIHW, 2023c). This equates to 280,200 mental health presentations (AIHW, 2023e). No data comparing WBHHS, QLD and Australian rates of mental health admissions was readily found accessible.

Mental health presentations to emergency departments have increased by 70% over the past 15 years (Commonwealth of Australia, as cited in QAMH, 2022). The acute system is consequently struggling with demand. The hospital often acts as gatekeeper of limited resources and many are at times left without care. Those who do make it through the doors are at greater risk of untimely or unplanned discharge and relapse, subsequently increasing hospital readmission rates (QAMH, 2022). The Queensland Alliance for Mental Health Wellbeing First report also notes that busy emergency departments are over-stimulating and unsuitable environments for people in mental distress, but, without realistic alternatives, they remain the primary entry point for receiving care (QAMH, 2022).



4,779

People were provided with hospital mental health care services by WBHHS in 2022-23

Showcase

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The OASIS

The Oasis is an after-hours alternative to the Emergency Department for people experiencing mental health crisis, distress or thoughts of suicide. It's a safe and relaxed space where you simply enjoy the restfulness of a comfortable chair, have a coffee or tea and talk to someone who can support you.

From its launch in February 2022 through to today, The Oasis has experienced strong demand, with over 1000 presentations from people of all ages – roughly half of which from people returning for support without needing to re-present to the Emergency Department (ED). The Oasis was initially launched as a limited-hours service, but has recently extended its hours due to strong growth in demand and hugely positive feedback from consumers. It is now open seven days a week, 2pm–9pm, to provide timely crisis care for people in need.

Oasis is the only place of its kind in Queensland open to people as young as 16 years old and is staffed by peer workers who use their own lived experiences to support others. Access to the Oasis is voluntary and can be connected with either by the emergency department, a recommendation from another community provider or simply presenting directly to The Oasis which is a few metres from the Hervey Bay Hospital Emergency Department building.

(Photo and information from article in Hervey Bay Advertiser Community Voice, Oct 18 2023).




**Wide Bay Hospital
and Health Service**



7.3 Complimentary Therapy Supports

No data on the use of complimentary therapies was found for the Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions.

Complementary and alternative therapies are health-related therapies that are not part of mainstream medical care but aim to increase wellbeing, aid relaxation and promote good mental health. The United Nations has recognised the need for supplementary interventions that can support existing mental health care (Malviya, S., Zupan, B., Meredith, P., 2022). These types of therapies can include acupuncture, herbal medicine, homeopathy, hypnotherapy, massage, meditation, pet therapy and yoga. Practices, such as chanting, breathwork and yoga in particular offer cost-effective and accessible supplementary mental health interventions and have substantial evidence for their mental health benefits (Malviya, S., Zupan, B., Meredith, P., 2022). It is important to note, however, that not all therapies are regulated and it is important to make sure the therapist a person chooses is suitably qualified/ accredited. Research shows the total number of client consultations to be estimated at 16 million annually, contributing over AUD\$1.8 billion to the economy (CMA, 2022). No available data on use of complimentary and alternative therapies for the Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions was found.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture focuses on puncturing specific acupoints located on the body with acupuncture needles or by applying heat and is based on Chinese Medicine theories. Around 10% of Australians have accessed acupuncture treatment in their lifetime. There are currently 4 thousand registered acupuncture practitioners registered with the Chinese Medical Board of Australia.

Herbal Medicine

Herbal medicine has its origins in ancient cultures. It involves the medicinal use of plants to treat disease and enhance general health and wellbeing. Herbs can interact with other pharmaceutical medications and should be taken with care and in consultation with a GP/ healthcare provider. About 70% of Australians use complimentary medicines each year.

Yoga

Yoga is a practice that connects the body, breath, and mind. It uses physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation to improve overall health. In 2021-2022, it is estimated 1.5 million Australians participated in Yoga.

Hypnotherapy

Hypnosis, also known as hypnotherapy, is a method of inducing a trance or a dream-like state of deep relaxation in order to treat disorders of a mainly psychological or emotional origin.

Massage

Massage is perhaps one of the oldest healing traditions. Massage is the practice of kneading or manipulating a person's muscles and other soft-tissue in order to improve their wellbeing or health. It is a form of manual therapy that includes holding, moving, and applying pressure to the muscles, tendons, ligaments and fascia. 20% of Australians access massage yearly.

Meditation

Meditation is the deliberate focusing of attention to bring about feelings of calm and heightened energy and awareness. It can be done sitting still or moving around 15% of adults practice meditation in Australia yearly. Meditation is more popular in Australia than in any other country, according to Google Trends data.





7.4 Local Support Services

No data on the use of local support services was found.

Bridges Health & Community Care:

Bridges is the longest established and leading provider of community-based mental health and drug and alcohol services in the Queensland Wide Bay and Fraser Coast communities currently operating in Central Queensland; Rockhampton, Gladstone and surrounding towns as well as North and South Burnett Regions. Services include allied health, psychological services, community-based mental health services and counselling and support programs, and NDIS support services.

Website: <https://www.bridgeshcc.org.au/>

Phone: 1300 707 655

Centacare – Family and relationship services:

Centacare Family and Relationship Services Hervey Bay supports people to navigate some of life's challenges. Their experienced team of practitioners work with people to ensure they feel safe and understood when receiving support. For people experiencing domestic and family violence, they work to ensure clients are safe from harm, connected with the right support services and empowered with knowledge to enable them to make their own decisions. Court support is available for women and men to help them better understand the legal system and what to expect during proceedings. For couples and families needing support with their relationships, Centacare offer programs and counselling to help them understand and overcome the issues they may be facing. Centacare also works alongside families experiencing separation providing evidence based programs that aim to achieve positive outcomes for all family members involved.

Website: <https://centacare.com/location/centacare-family-and-relationship-services-fraser-coast/>

Phone: (07) 3324 3838

Flourish Hervey Bay:

Flourish Hervey Bay helps people with a lived experience feel supported, meet their everyday challenges and support them to live ordinary - even extraordinary lives. Flourish has a peer workforce with more than 50% of people employed having lived experience around mental health. Flourish connects people with supports and skills including around daily support, employment, housing, community connection, and learning & education.

Website: <https://www.flourishaustralia.org.au/service/hervey-bay>

Phone: (02) 9393 9560





7.4 Local Support Services

Galangoor Duwalami Primary Health Care:

Galangoor is a community controlled service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Fraser Coast. They support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to live a healthy life, by providing holistic, culturally appropriate services relevant to the needs of our community. Services include clinical services, chronic disease care, preventative health, healthy living, healthy communities and healthy futures.

Website: <https://primaryhealth.org.au/>

Hervey Bay Phone: (07) 4194 5554

Maryborough Phone: (07) 4184 9966

Headspace:

Headspace provides free health and community services for young people 12-25 years old on the Fraser Coast. Headspace provides support for mental health, general health, drug and alcohol issues, and vocation and education support. With the help of its dedicated youth friendly staff of Psychologists, Counsellors and Intake & Access workers, Headspace has been designed as a one-stop-shop for young people seeking help or advice for any of their concerns.

Website: <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/hervey-bay/>

Hervey Bay Phone: (07) 4303 2100

Maryborough Phone: (07) 4303 2100

Bundaberg Phone: (07) 4152 3931

Trauma Assist:

Provides support around sexual abuse, domestic and family violence, intergenerational trauma support, psychosocial recovery coaching, trauma informed workshops, youth assist program, and school workshops.

Website: <https://trauma-assist.com.au/>


Phone: 07 4194 5230

Wide Bay Women's Health Centre:

Wide Bay Women's Health Centre provides a range of health services, empowering women, and improving their physical and emotional health. In addition to this, the Centre offers confidential services on all aspects of women's health, sexual assault counselling, information and referral services, self-development groups and workshops, as well as assistance, information and referral on domestic violence issues.

Website: <https://wbwhc.org.au/>

Phone: (07) 4125 5788





7.4 Local Support Services

Adult Community Mental Health Services:

The Adult Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Service provides a comprehensive range of services to assist people in Bundaberg with both mental health and alcohol and other drug issues. They provide a specialised service for individuals of all ages, directly affected by severe and complex mental illness and/or problematic substance use, as well as promoting mental health and wellbeing in the community. The service strives to promote recovery and build resilience to reduce the impact of mental illness on individuals, their carers and families. They also specialise in community-based treatment provided close to home and are supported by a range of inpatient and residential facilities, depending on the clinical needs of the consumer. The Adult Community Mental Health teams provide assessment and treatment for people who are at risk or who have a serious mental illness with complex needs. They also provide specialised care co-ordination/case management, education, specific treatment interventions and medical specialist follow-up with a recovery focus. They have strong linkages with psychosocial support services in the community who can provide additional support.

Website: <https://www.widebay.health.qld.gov.au/>

Phone: (07) 4150 2600

IMPACT Mental Health Services:

IMPACT provides wrap-around support services to support people in Bundaberg and surrounds with their mental health and wellbeing. Services include Child and Youth Enhanced Primary Mental Health (CYCC) for 12-25 year olds, Commonwealth Psychosocial Support (CPS), Peer Support services (GBPRS), and Community Access Program (CAP) - including Childers.

Website: <https://impact.org.au/support-and-wellbeing/disability-mental-health/mental-health-services/>

Phone: 1800 179 233





7.5 Hotlines

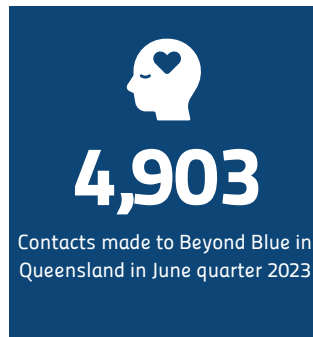
There were a total of 439,200 contacts made to mental health hotlines and websites in the June quarter of 2023 across Australia

Across Australia, in the June quarter of 2023, there were about:

- 264,300 contacts made to Lifeline (44,970, or 17% were in Queensland); no change from the same quarter in 2022 and 1% lower than 2021.
- 77,700 contacts made to Kids Helpline (4,865 or 6.2% were in Queensland); 3% lower than the same quarter in 2022 and 14% lower than 2021.
- 86,100 contacts made to Beyond Blue (4,903 or 5.6% were in Queensland); this was 10% higher than the same quarter in 2022 and 15% higher than 2021.
- 7,300 ReachOut website users per day (on average) (117,828 visits were from people in Queensland) or ; 14% higher than the same quarter in 2022 and 15% lower than 2021.
- 3,800 Head to Health website users per day (on average); 48% higher than the same quarter in 2022 and 172% higher than 2021.

(AIHW, 2023g).

No data on the use of hotlines specific to Fraser Coast and Hinkler regions was found.





7.6 Barriers to Seeking Support

People living in inner regional areas like Fraser Coast & Hinkler access psychiatrists 1.6 times less than those living in cities.

Barriers to people seeking support can be both systemic and non-systemic:

Systemic Barriers:

Major systemic barriers to seeking mental health support include waiting times and costs to access services (Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), n.d). The Australian Government is responding to systemic barriers through several initiatives including the Better Access initiative, which provides 10 Medicare-subsidised individual and up to 10 group allied mental health services each year (Department of Health and Aged Care, 2023).

Stigma:

Non-systemic barriers can include mental health-related stigmas such as holding stigmatised views of people with mental illness, believing others hold stigmatising views of people with mental illness, experiencing internalised stigma, such as shame, regarding mental health issues, holding stigmatised views of people who seek treatment for mental health issues (QFCC, n.d). In 2021, over four million Australians experienced mental health-related stigma and discrimination in the prior 12 months (Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government, 2022).

Lack of Knowledge:

Lack of knowledge about mental health services and how to navigate the health care system is a common barrier. Those who most need support may be least able to navigate the mental health care system. For example, people with high levels of psychological distress are less likely to experience the health system as easy to navigate compared with people with lower levels of distress (QFCC, n.d).

Regional, Rural and Remote Areas:

People living in regional, rural and remote areas may face barriers of environmental adversity, geographic isolation, poorer socioeconomic circumstances, and restricted access to services (Parliament of Australia, n.d). People living in inner regional areas like Fraser Coast and Hinkler access psychiatrists 1.6 times less than people in cities and clinical psychologists 1.3 times less (Parliament of Australia, as cited in Country to Coast Primary Health Network, 2021).



4M

Australians experienced mental health related stigma and discrimination



1.6

People living in inner regional areas like Fraser Coast & Hinkler access psychiatrists 1.6 times less than people in cities



1.3

People living in inner regional areas like Fraser Coast & Hinkler access psychologists 1.3 times less than people in cities



With inclusive
communities, mental
health programs can
work to their full
potential

-Fountain House



Showcase

Friendship Bench

Friendship Bench provides sustainable community based psychological interventions that are evidence based, accessible and scalable.

Friendship Bench has reimagined the delivery of evidence-based mental healthcare and envisions a world where a friendship bench is within walking distance for all.

Originating in Zimbabwe, Friendship Bench is guided by values of empathy and connection and aims to get people out of kufungisisa - depression & anxiety - by creating safe spaces and a sense of belonging in communities to improve mental wellbeing and enhance quality of life. The Friendship Bench clinical team trains community health workers to provide basic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with an emphasis on Problem Solving Therapy, activity scheduling and peer led group support.

Trained CHWs sit with their clients outdoors, under the trees on wooden park benches in discreet safe spaces in the community. During training, a referral pathway is established for cases which are considered 'red flags' where a higher level of care is needed.

What if sometimes all people need is a chat on a park bench?

After the one-on-one talk therapy, Friendship Bench clients are introduced to a peer led support group known as Circle Kubatana Tose (CKT), meaning 'holding hands together'. In these groups clients are connected to others who have sat on the Friendship Bench, received PST and became empowered to solve their own problems. Group members can relate to one another because they tend to come from the same community and have learned about the benefit of empathic listening. This safe space to talk in and be heard contributes to clients' sense of belonging and reduces stigma surrounding mental health and sharing of personal issues. Clients in groups also learn skills to produce products to generate funding for the initiative.

[> LEARN MORE](#)





8. Mental Health in the Community

What is community doing about Mental Health & Wellbeing?



8.1 Community Led-Initiatives

The Department of Social Services is currently providing funding for community-led mental health initiatives in the Hinkler region through the Social Shift: Community-led Support Fund

Communities are at the front line of mental health in Australia, but community responses have not received anything like the same investment in their development as professional and medical responses have, however, with the right resources, and support, communities are perfectly capable of developing solutions that surprise professionals in their ingenuity and relevance (TACSI, n.d). Fortunately, in the Hinkler region, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and HBNC, through the Social Shift: Community-led Support Fund is calling for community projects to tackle a number of issues listed in the DSS Local Services Plan priority areas including mental health. Hinkler is only one of four areas in Australia to receive this funding with the HBNC acting as the Brokerage Organisation to assist community groups, individuals and organisations to apply. Types of community-led responses can include communities' awareness of potential roles and responses around mental health, building community capability for mental health innovation, funding innovative ideas and providing professional expertise to community-led work (TACSI, n.d).

Our Community Voice Project

Through the Social Shift, free local newspaper The Hervey Bay Advertiser has been funded to provide a fortnightly "Our Community Voice" publication. Our Community Voice addresses local social issues including mental health, AOD, DFV and employment. It alternates with a fortnightly Community Calendar connecting local community with information on workshops & events.

HERVEY BAY Advertiser





8.2 Mental Health in the Workplace

Safe and healthy work environments support good mental health and can contribute to recovery

Safe and healthy working environments are not only a fundamental right but also support good mental health and can contribute to recovery and inclusion, improve confidence and social functioning (WHO, 2022). The average worker spends over a third of their weekly waking hours at work in Australia (Black Dog Institute, n.d). Workplaces can provide a livelihood, a sense of confidence, purpose and achievement, an opportunity for positive relationships and inclusion in a community, and a platform for structured routines, among many other benefits (WHO, 2022). Mentally healthy workplaces attract and retain skilled staff and enable high levels of engagement, performance, productivity and quality of outputs/outcomes. Conversely, factors relating to poor work design, excessive work demands, and poor psychosocial work conditions can increase the risk of mental illness (QMHC, 2022).

In Australia, mental illness is now the leading cause of sickness absence and long-term work incapacity (Black Dog Institute, n.d). The national cost of lower economic participation and lost productivity ranges from \$12 to \$39 billion due to lower employment, absenteeism, and presenteeism. On average, it is estimated that people with mental ill-health reported that they reduced the amount that they worked by 14-18 days per year due to psychological distress (QMHC, 2022). On the other hand, it is estimated that the return on investment for every dollar spent creating mentally healthy workplaces is between \$2.30116 and \$4.00117, with evidence supporting an integrated model for workplace mental health that includes efforts to prevent and reduce psychosocial work-related risk factors, promote the positive aspects of work, and identify and intervene early when mental health issues occur (QMHC, 2022).

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WPHS), Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) provide leadership in setting the workplace mental health policy direction including a soon to be released Managing the risks of work-related psychosocial hazards Code of Practice o development and implementation of the Queensland Mental Health at Work Action Plan (currently being revised), Mentally healthy workplace toolkit, People at work being the only Australian validated psychosocial risk assessment psychosocial tool for workplaces, and the Leading Well Queensland initiative (QMHC, 2022).

No specific data for Hinkler or Fraser Coast was found relating to workplace mental health.



Workplace Wellbeing

Mindfulness Pods

At all of the centres of the HBNC, mindfulness pods are available for staff to take breaks. With the community sector falling in the high risk category for mental illness and workers exposed to high stress loads, HBNC has had to be innovative in ensuring staff can take time and space for wellbeing when needed.

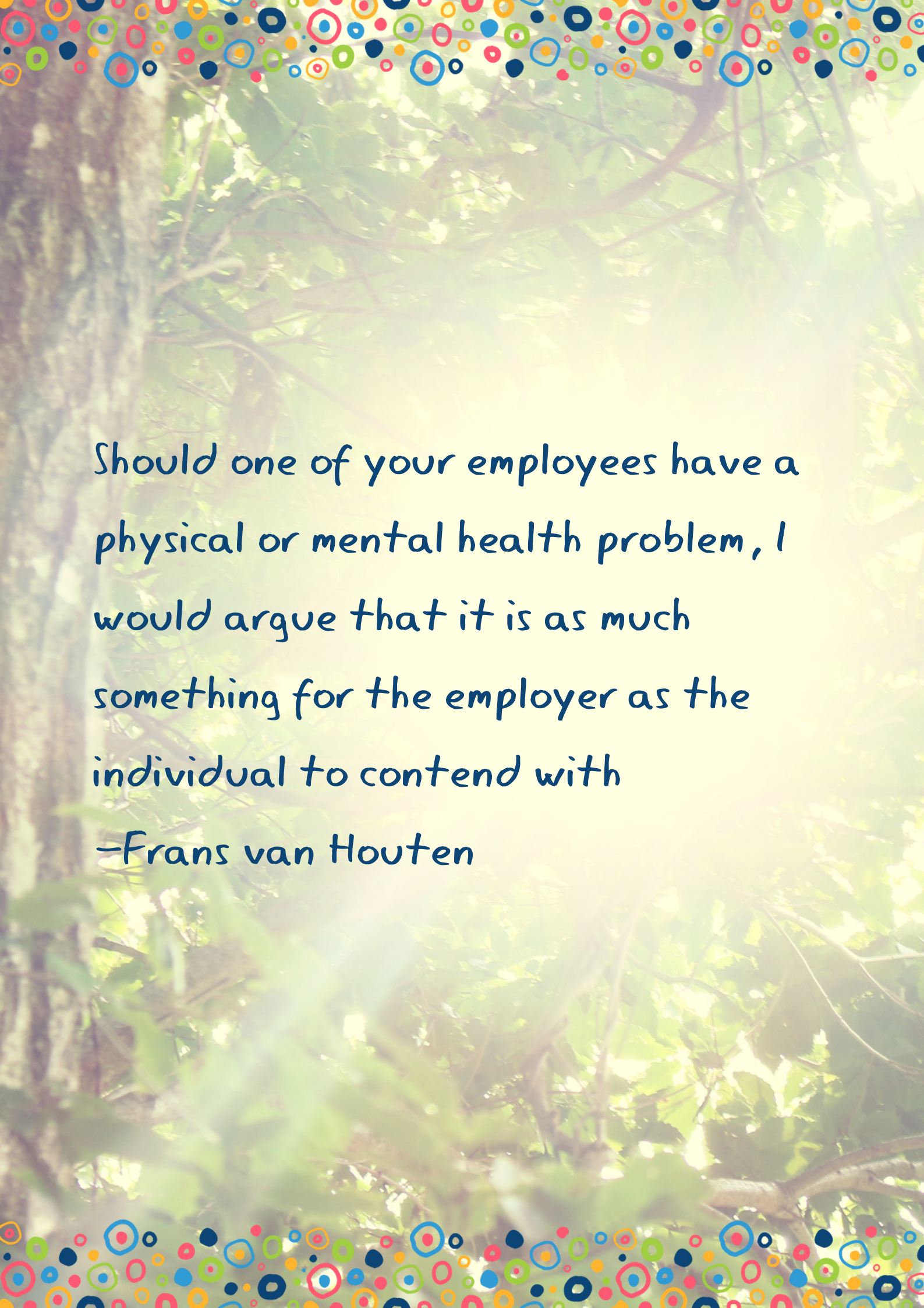

The Mindfulness Pods are spaces that can be used when staff need a few quiet moments and some privacy. Each of the pods have nature themes and wellbeing materials with at least one pod at each centre having a massage chair. Staff can take a few moments to re-centre and breath in peace and quiet before continuing on with their day.



Mentally healthy workplaces with high levels of wellbeing

- People watch out for each other and can ask someone if they're ok
- Managers and teams understand mental health and openly talk about it
- People know about things they can do to build resilience for challenging times at work and at home
- Staff with mental health concerns seek help early
- Staff with mental health issues are supported in their recovery (Black Dog Institute, n.d).





Should one of your employees have a physical or mental health problem, I would argue that it is as much something for the employer as the individual to contend with

-Frans van Houten



Showcase

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Indigenous Women's Healing Camps

The Indigenous Women's Cultural Healing Camps is an initiative of the Wide Bay Women's Health Centre that aims to assist women who have experienced domestic and family violence (DFV) and other life traumas to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

The camps run for 3 days and are facilitated in partnership with specialist workers in DFV, alcohol and other drugs, education and employment and mental health.

Activities include sharing cultural history and evidence-based, best practice programs to build strong, empowering healthy relationships such as Shark Cage and Love Bites.

The healing camps are an innovative community initiative to improve indigenous women's connection to culture, self-confidence and mental health and wellbeing so that they can make positive life choices for a bright future.



Wide Bay Women's
Health Centre



9. Mental Health Resources & Training

Where can people find support & information?



9.1 Resources

The Little Blue Book: Mental Health Guide:

The Little Blue Book is a mental health guide for younger people. The resources was developed through a partnership between Fraser Coast Regional Council and the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service and is an interactive booklet that youth can work through to improve their mental health and wellbeing.



Access the Little Blue Book here

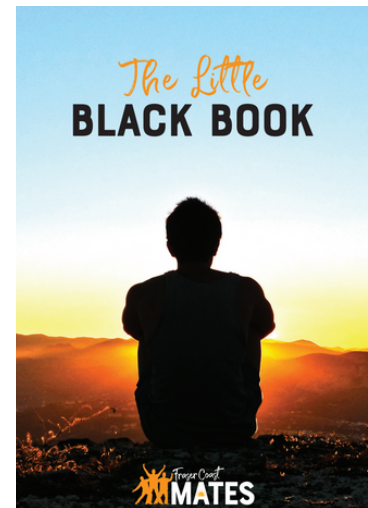


The Little Black Book: Men's Mental Health Directory

The Little Black Book is a directory of services, contacts and support groups, and aims to empower men to reach their potential and enjoy a long and high quality life. The Little Black Book resource has been developed by Fraser Coast Mates in partnership with the Fraser Coast Regional Council.



Access the Little Black Book here



9.2 Training

Psychological First Aid Training:

ePsyFA- Psychological first aid is a support activity that helps people impacted by an emergency, disaster or traumatic event. It is a humane, supportive response to another person who is suffering and may need support. Red Cross offer a self-paced eLearning course that is suitable for anyone who generally wants a better understanding of how to provide meaningful support during an emergency, disaster or traumatic event.

The course covers:

- The six steps to wellbeing
- What is psychological first aid?
- Five elements of psychological first aid
- Crisis, complex situations and reactions
- Psychological first aid action principles
- Supporting children and young people
- Cultural and ethical considerations for psychological first aid
- Privacy and confidentiality considerations for psychological first aid
- Taking care after an eve

Access the training here



Mental Health First Aid Training:

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) uses a similar approach to physical first aid training. Using a practical, skills-based action plan, participants learn the skills to recognise and respond to someone experiencing a mental health problem or mental health crisis, until professional help is received or the crisis resolves. Individuals who complete Mental Health First Aid training are known as MHFAiders. Equipped with the skills to listen, connect, and offer support when it matters most, MHFAiders play a vital role in reducing stigma and promoting pathways to support for those experiencing mental health problems in our workplaces, communities, schools, and tertiary institutions.

Access the training here



9.2 Training

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST):

ASIST, delivered by Lifeline is comprehensive training that provides knowledge and skills to recognise when a person may be having thoughts of suicide; respond in ways that help increase their immediate safety; and refer them to appropriate help. ASIST is a LivingWorks training product, which is evidence-based and well evaluated, produced in Canada and delivered across the world.


Attend the award-winning ASIST workshop and learn to:

- Recognise people at risk of suicide.
- Talk to them, hear their stories and understand their situations.
- Help them stay safe with a life-affirming intervention.

The two-day ASIST workshop is open to anyone 16 years or older. Widely used by both professionals and the general public, ASIST offers something to every participant, no matter how experienced.

Access the
training here





Now, more than ever, we
need to find ways to stay
connected to our community.
No one should feel alone or
without the information,
support and help they need

Showcase

Thinking Health Program

What if we supported pregnant women at home?

The Thinking Health Program (THP) is an evidence-based initiative delivered in Peru, Bolivia and Pakistan aimed at reducing maternal depression and strengthening emotional skills in mothers through a community-based platform of care.

Pregnant women are screened by professionals and referred to the program if deemed at risk and benefitting from the intervention.

Trained workers visit women at home for 16 sessions working through three steps and three areas of healthy thinking—personal health, the mother's relationship with the baby and the relationship of the mother with her environment. The sessions also cover 5 modules of a CBT-based workbook and include preparing for the baby's arrival, the baby's arrival, early infancy, middle infancy, late infancy. The workbook is image based and suitable for low literacy. The sessions are delivered from the third trimester of pregnancy to 10 months after the birth of the baby.

THP has made significant reductions in baseline scores for perinatal depression after re-screening three months after the intervention.



[LEARN MORE](#)





10. Recommendations

Community Initiatives & Recommendations



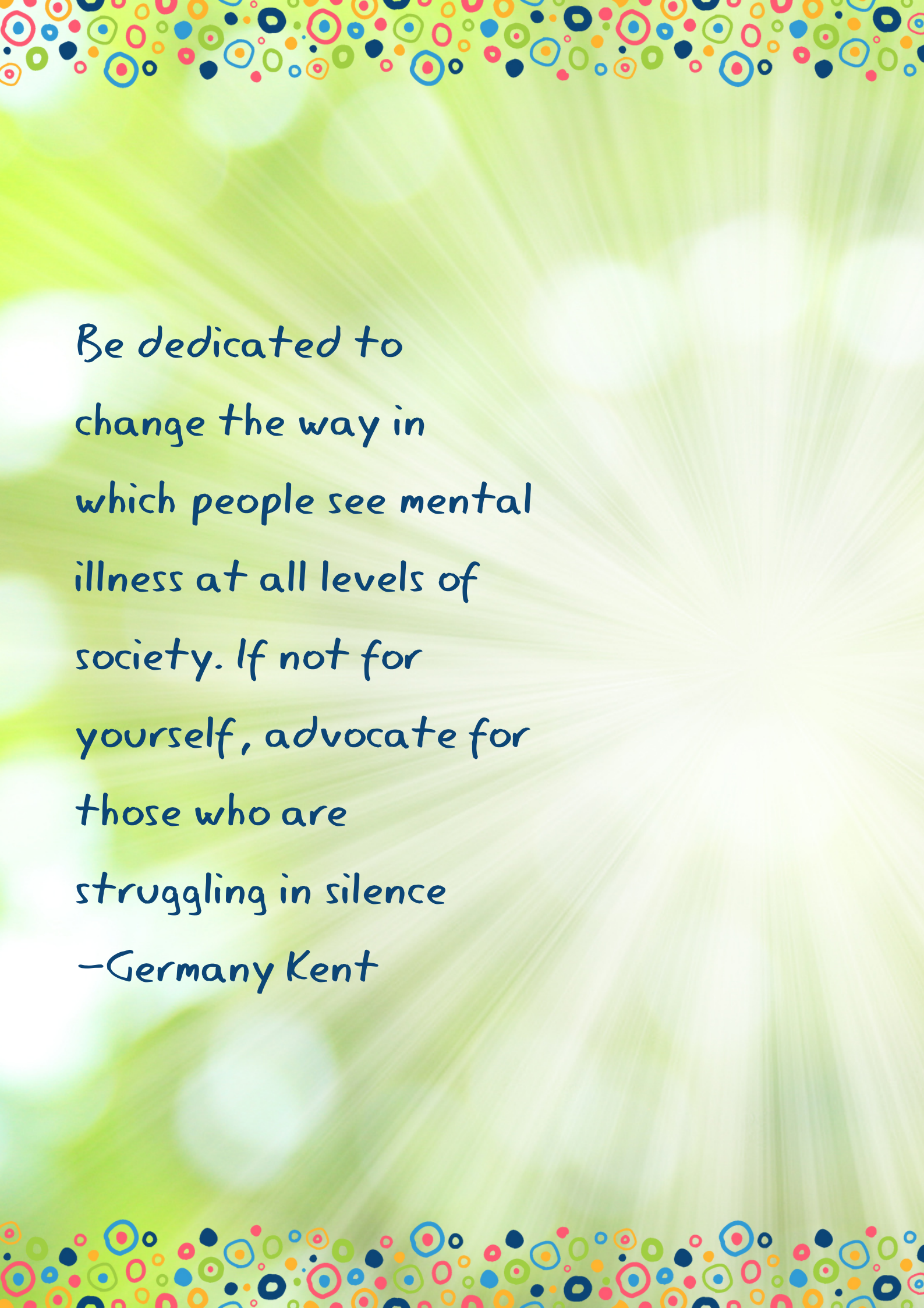


10.1 Recommendations

Insert

insert





Be dedicated to
change the way in
which people see mental
illness at all levels of
society. If not for
yourself, advocate for
those who are
struggling in silence
-Germany Kent



Showcase

[LEARN MORE](#)



Women's Walk & Talk

Women's Walk & Talk is a new group in Hervey Bay that aims to promote and support women's physical, social and mental health through engaging in walking groups and fostering social connections.


Women's Walk & Talk is open to all women and is based on values of connection, wellbeing, inclusivity, empowerment, inspiration and community support.

The group walks every Monday afternoon at 5:15pm and every Thursday morning at 5:30am.





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Definitions

- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
 - Australian Defence Force (ADF)
 - Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
 - Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)
 - World Health Organization (WHO)
 - The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)
 - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
 - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
 - Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC)
 - Public Health information Development Unit (PHIDU)
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ+)
 - Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)
 - Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)
 - No date (N.d.)
 - Primary Health Network (PHN)
 - Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS)
 - Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH)
 - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
 - Thinking Health Program (THP)
 - Department of Social Services (DSS)
 - Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO)
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Appendix A

Fraser Coast Wellbeing Survey 2023

Full comments on what Fraser Coast residents think is needed to improve community connectedness:

- More accessible events and better understanding towards minority groups
 - Be more transparent with future happenings/ development in the region
 - House the homeless
 - More events that are either free, or cost a minimal amount for entry
 - Enforce laws that protect honest citizens. Stop giving juveniles power to do whatever they want however far outside of the law
 - Vote in a Council that listens to its community and cares what its community think
 - Target communication checking in with neighbours maybe? And people in the street?
 - Continue providing community activities e.g. Wet Side, Carol's by Candlelight
 - Advertise community events earlier and more often
 - Hold activities in times that suit workers and non-workers
 - Free open air music in the park. Gatherings, pic bbq sausage sizzles for different age groups
 - I think there are lots of great options but my anxiety holds me back from getting involved more
 - More user friendly for those with disabilities
 - Help the homeless, give kids and teens something productive to work towards so they don't have enough energy to go out and commit crimes
 - Depends on age of residents and if the resident wants to get involved or not. We need to fix it youth crime that she b number one, get tough on youth. National service for youth that would improve the community and make it safer for residents
 - Maybe a booklet showing what things are here for over 60's to do.
 - Put the onus on the whole community. So many people expect others to do the work for them but maybe don't know what options are available to them to encourage and foster connection in a grassroots way
 - Collate all sports and groups in one place so we can find them
 - Burrum Heads lacks a swimming pool. Often swimming in the ocean is not possible and many of us suffer from arthritis, are undertaking rehab and want to exercise in the water. Howard State School is the nearest pool and is limited in its opening times for community use
 - More inclusive offerings
 - Well I think some times they just overlook the older people we become invisible
 - Everything costs so much and events not affordable for most
 - Get rid of the current council who are not working for the people at all!
 - Maybe smaller groups of interest, large groups are sometimes off putting
 - Ensure everyone has access to what's available not just in social media
 - For volunteers and people looking after there own adult children grand children Voluntary need more time out
- 



Appendix A

- Actually get out and talk to people in the street, smile say good morning would be a start
 - Give options to people on how to communicate - on- line, phone, text, call back
 - Make it safer, reduce crime, put cameras in car parks
 - Bring back a local free newspaper so residents know what is happening in the community. Not everyone has social media and even then, events are not advertised
 - Help the youth connect
 - Have more things on that don't cost as much
 - Stuff that's free or very cheap for people, who aren't pensioners or on Centrelink, just struggling financially
 - Encourage community participation
 - Talk to older incapacitated people
 - Advertise events Electronic board on the Esplanade advertising upcoming events
 - Become more involved.....PARTICIPATE!
 - Public parks
 - It used to be that the free community newspaper with its events page would be the 'go to' source for everything around. now the internet disconnects us by profiling only interests it predicts were interested in
 - Provide face to face interactions/interventions in the home or community and no rely so heavily on the use of digital technology and communication - on-line help, telehealth. Access for rural and isolated people is still a big issue, as is lack of digital literacy
 - More outdoor dining, sit areas to mingle. Live music in venues rather than pokies. Activities during weekdays as well as weekends as a lot of people don't have weekends off
 - Advertise the older persons' morning tea in October a bit better! Let people know of public events
 - More community focused events such as collective buy/swap/sell events (this will encourage recycling, reduce waste and also help those that are in need of \$\$ or items they cannot afford to purchase new). Community events such as a town run fair (not run by out of towners)
 - Mini swap meets at street/block level
 - Less red tape
 - Encourage individual street parties - get to know your neighbours, set up a babysitter club (tokens) for families, Work with council to create weekend/ evening events at the sea oval
 - More family oriented events that encourage socialisation of working age residents
 - Nothing, I believe there are many events and activities that bring the community together
 - Increase library hours Better public transport
 - More awareness of groups in the community
 - Maybe some community based events around Wondunna. Whole suburb feels like a building site at the moment
 - Be more accepting of people who move to the area
 - Inclusion
- 



Appendix A

- Get rid of acting Allied Health positions who do nothing to get support for all cancers other than breast cancer and maybe prostate who used to get separate support groups. The Tree house was being looked at according to someone in Allied Health as an option but nothing happened. Hoped some of the money the HBNC got could have been used to pay a staff member to run such a program. I have become aware of a patient dying alone with no support from a cancer support group
 - Free local paper for information on Fraser coast events
 - Perhaps every 2 weeks or once a month put on a lunch for each nationality that resides on the Fraser Coast. Residents pay to come to the lunch
 - Look at transport options that are available for the elderly - they have many medical appts, shopping and then nothing left in package for recreation - taxis are useless with school children prioritised (no probs with that) but usually leads to wait time never under two hours - seriously this is the the reality and leaving our older people without food, drink often toilet for hours. I experience this with my mum EVERY week
 - Improve communication/marketing of events, workshops, things of interest in social media, newsletters etc. Offer safe, supportive, friendly places to gather together, not necessarily age specific, multi generational programs
 - Have access to more social workers in the community for people to access. One at the centre
 - More free events
 - More advice as to events and indeed more events
 - Please don't go entirely online. There are people (of many ages) who are not able, or do not want to use computers, etc. This is 'imposing' a disconnect and forcing people into isolation. Also, mobility and transport issues can also compound this situation...
 - Hervey Bay is far too right wing politically. There are too many bigots that makes it near impossible to have a diverse community
 - Better advertising of community groups and clubs. The free paper used to have a listing of these. I would like to see a single, comprehensive listing somewhere. Maybe online, better in the Hervey Bay Advertiser
 - Keep encouraging and promoting the free community events that exist already, as well as looking to create new opportunities
 - Provide a central service that people can easily access to find out what is available in the local area that they may be interested in pursuing...this sort of information is currently all over the place
 - More free events
 - Host a meet and greet for suburbs
 - Better communication re upcoming events and opportunities to engage in various groups. A clear centralised communication hub to promote events, activities, clubs would be great. It is rather tricky to locate information as it's spread, ineffectively across a range of platforms that are often difficult to locate
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Appendix A

- Hold more community based classes that address everyday stresses
 - Organise small scale program targeting specific group for free
 - Stop the negative, minimising talk in media. Just create positive opportunities and people will rise to them
 - Promote neighbourhood watch groups. This would benefit neighbourhoods not just in relation to ongoing safety concerns but also encourage connectedness with each other
 - For people who work it would be nice to have things that were available in the evenings or weekends
 - More organisations, like the neighbourhood centre and Men's Shed, to provide opportunities to meet and engage with others
 - Ensure all available means of advertising events, where residents have the opportunity to connect in some way, are utilised. Ensure all events are easily accessed by all residents
 - Community events like markets, festivals, connect young and old together
 - I should engage more. It is not the communities' fault in any way
 - Design more programs for the elderly, assist with transport
 - Become involved in community groups, services, programs, activities, events and organisations
 - Change original and long time residents unwelcoming/unfriendly attitude
 - More community events, that are well advertised
 - Continue to provide events, classes, groups with leaders/individuals that help facilitate interaction and connection
 - Some how more advertising what is out there
 - Respect elders. Patience with disability
 - Have group sessions/morning tea in the Urangan area eg. Dayman Park, Botanic Gardens
 - To allow for specific interests, such as knitting or fishing, but ensuring those sharing the knowledge are trained on modern inclusive skills. These specific interests tend to "other" people, and isolate community to silos
 - Better advertising, lots of great programs but older people don't go on social media
 - More organised sport at a recreational and fun level
 - Neighbours could check on one another
 - Awareness, communication, word of mouth
 - Spend time together with things people can look forward too
 - More interesting activities for 65+
 - Local suburb community days eg tree planting at local parks or beaches
 - Letterbox drop with info of coming community events
 - Find some interesting and challenging activities for seniors
 - Lots of different themed workshops/events/education opportunities
 - Hervey Bay is a great community and for me and my husband webike ride with a self formed group twice a week and have coffee three times a week. We travel, camp and ride rail trails in Australian states and overseas
- 



Appendix A


- Improve affordable transport, including for outer suburbs Provide a central registry of all service and volunteer organisations for newcomers to see what they may like to join
 - More activities at Wellness Centre - loved Art and Zentangles etc but no longer offered. Reopen the library asap. Cycle paths in more areas. Bus service from Augustus Estate to town!!!! More footpaths along major roads. Pedestrian only areas
 - With reference to elderly who are unable to drive, I believe it is important to have more regular gatherings/social events using both the Pialba & Urangan cntrs. An ever growing problem is elderly ppl not having transport to go to social events. Elderly then become housebound and very lonely causing depression. We need to look at an effective transport system
 - Create more safe spaces for CREATIVE and INNOVATIVE people, ideas and process (minimal fee, low charge etc). Create an investment club for good ideas ... and social innovation ... publish a book or APP for change on the Fraser Coast ... the list is endless ...
 - Free music - festivals like the Yagubi festival which took place on the oval - was volunteer run and went from Friday 6pm to Sunday 6pm with camping/vans in the adjoining oval camping grounds. It was amazing. Smaller afternoon into the night free gatherings inviting musicians to partake. could be in neighbourhood parks, ie for me it would be Dayman Point. Organise community events that are also leafletted in the area they are being held. (A lot of people are still not IT literate). So if an event is being held in Urangan make sure Urangan is leafletted
 - Celebrate Whale watch parade, carols @ Xmas, maintenance Eli waters ponds, to make it a visual delight
 - More events earlier in the week as some people are not able to attend on weekends
 - There are many opportunities for residents to be involved in social activities; the issue is how to reach people who are lonely/isolated/have barriers to participation of one form or another
 - Develop and maintain our region's green spaces so they are not lost. Region already has a good mix of free family events. May be more activities aimed at younger people 18-40 rather than older people
 - Maintain a Police Station that is open to the public seven days a week with longer hours in which the front counter is maned. That the citizens of a city the size of Hervey Bay should expect
 - Seating in public places eg outside shops etc. More shade to encourage walking. More notice boards to publicise events, sales etc.
 - Practice Oneness... We are All One... One with Spirit... One with Life!
 - Keep building on current resources available
 - Encourage people to go out and partake in community events
 - Open days for community groups to have a showcase of what is on offer for activities clubs etc
 - Letterbox drops of community events
 - Celebrate diversity and youth
 - Make the community safer from crimes of theft
 - It's up to the individual to find their niche. There are so many opportunities to be connected in our region
- 



Appendix A


- More open about what is here
- Honestly, I think the lack of Christmas spirit in December really disconnects the community. I know many are disappointed with how little festivities there is in Hervey Bay
- Have after hours or weekend events in each area
- Advertise more social activities
- More public free social events
- Oldies on own with no transport or means to get out need help
- More free events for older and disabled people
- Better on line access to things so those of us that are unable to drive or catch public transport
- I think it is an individual thing. Lots of community groups and activities happening. Just need to know where to find them
- That is a hard question as most residents come from somewhere else. High fences in communities don't help and lots of people won't even speak
- Create more family friendly events and mum time activities. I sometimes feel disconnected from other mums cause Covid stopped mothers groups. Inter generational program I think would be great too
- Transport
- More drop in group activities. Physical ones. Walks, bike rides, paddle boarding. Something that appeals to younger people
- Direct invites to events

Full comments on what Fraser Coast residents think is needed to improve community connectedness:

- Better understanding towards community needs
 - Provide toilets in the Centrelink building as a lot of older clients and mothers with little ones who need a toilet quickly when reqd. To be told via notice that the shopping centre over the road is the closest one.. then they lose their place in the line and give up!!!
 - House the homeless
 - Neighbourhood watch with police backup
 - Elect politicians that increase police numbers and introduce harsher sentencing legislation
 - Clean up the beach front. I know controversial but maybe just cutting a few trees to open up beautiful views to the ocean, light up main footpath to increase visibility and safety so people walk. Will increase view of those on footpath etc. Widen foot path on main beach - to cater for elderly and young ones on scooters. Encourage more people to be outdoors in our beautiful region - people naturally connect more. The sound of the ocean along with beautiful untouched main shore no doubt brings smiles to everyone's faces
 - Maintain contact through social media, radio etc.
 - Bring more specialists to Hervey Bay
 - Hold activities in times that suit workers and non-workers
 - Unsure as it gets bigger connections will be lost over time
- 




Appendix A

- Offer assistance with organisations feeding the street people which now has a growing population of children with no roof over their heads
 - Desperately need more affordable housing for families
 - Preserve what is left of the natural environment. Slow down the development or at least make it less high density
 - Book clubs. Free skills courses for teens
 - National service. Get tough on youth crime send them to juvenile detention centre in the outback that would make our community safer. Also have a police station that is open on weekends 24 hrs. If we have this then it will improve the Well being of residents coz we will all feel safer
 - More police to stop young ones from damaging property and racing around the streets at night
 - Have free events for seniors
 - Increased mental health and specialist availability - telehealth should be more accessible. Travelling to Brisbane to receive test results is silly
 - Facilitate activities
 - Burrum Heads lacks a swimming pool. Often swimming in the ocean is not possible and many of us suffer from arthritis, are undertaking rehab and want to exercise in the water. Howard State School is the nearest pool and is limited in its opening times for community use
 - There is a lot to offer but transport is a bit issue
 - More free outings, not everyone has a never ending bank balance
 - Get rid of the current council who are not working for the people at all!
 - I need to get someone to look out for my husband so that I can go to medical appointments and get out and walk too
 - Make reaching out more accessible
 - Take services to the people think outside the box
 - More housing for the homeless and also living rough. Living in a mouldy caravan is not healthy. Need more Community housing
 - Show interest in people everyday not just a staged events
 - Notice what's happening for neighbours, co-worker, business people, engage with everyone. Let them know what's happening in the local area
 - Make it safer, get youth off the streets at night, get rid of purple scooters, improve Ann & Boat Harbour Drive intersection - no visibility for cars, pedestrians need to give way
 - Provide more free activities out of work hours. Lots of exercise programs, etc are during work hours and some of us still have to work
 - Help address the youth violence and domestic violence and socio economic status in the bay
 - Try get specialists here
 - Care for one another. Be kind
 - Better Health system. Long waiting times for appts with specialists at HB hospital
 - Just keep up the excellent work
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Appendix A

- Public park events
 - Having prior knowledge of up coming events
 - Raise Awareness, Care, Be Kind, Reach Out, Help People To Belong To Their Community, Notice What's Happening, Take Action, Provide Opportunities for Connection. Communities large and small can take action, have a voice and contribute to overall improved community wellness
 - Improve walking tracks so people feel safe exercising outdoors, without fear of being hit by bikers scooters etc.
 - Improve the foot paths and put in some where there are none. The walkway along the Esplanade is hazardous with uneven cobbles and crazies going too fast on electric scooters. Safe, even footpaths would be fantastic.
 - Talk to neighbours and those we come a ross
 - Be kind. Think before you act and speak at all levels
 - Health talks, more workshops on alternative medicine/ self care
 - Come together to support young residents finding things to to with their time - things like bay beats, maybe more beach-based activities?
 - More promotion and advertising around what services are available to them
 - Offer free wellbeing events on weekdays and weekends that are free for all to attend. It's a great way to meet people and can have a coffee after
 - It would be good to have a drop in place to see what's planned for the suburb and how we can get involved to keep a 'local' feel. Ie. clean up nature reserves etc
 - Make them welcome, and not live in the past, with their own little clicks
 - Inclusion
 - Obviously no priority for a lot of cancer suffers needing the allied health support group reinstated. We have written letters and contacted politicians all to no avail, I contacted the acting head of Allied health in Bundaberg and she was still looking at it but as usual nothing happens
 - More organised activities
 - Regularly have speakers talk on health issues, and how residents can improve their health
 - Look out for each other more, be more tolerant of each other, check up on the elderly neighbours
 - Provide opportunities & ensure they are well known, eg segment on the local news, social media, free newsprint
 - Have activities out of hours not just during the day, to encourage inclusion, building connections, and learning a new skill EG: Sewing, Gardening club, art classes
 - More social housing and youth mental health services
 - Provide green spaces and parkland ,community concerts, youth activities and recreation, limit availability of alcohol , promote cultural exchange
 - Lock up youth who commit crime
 - Ride shares, invitations, etc - but for many there is a 'communication divide' that individuals are not aware of. We have all frequently 'said/heard' - I never knew that was on or available.
- 




Appendix A

- Think about others. Care for animals. Care for the environment
 - Advocacy for better healthcare and cost of living measures
 - Get behind activities that promote physical, mental, and social development
 - Have workshops or speakers going to social groups to encourage Creating & sharing belonging with neighbours - as in the Neighbours Everyday program
 - Sharing information better about what is already happening
 - Walking group in different areas
 - There is a level of personal responsibility required to engage, connect and care for those around us which in turn helps create a community that also meets our needs
 - Organise activities to connect people and encourage people to find their sister family
 - Stop funding "mental health" activities and support. Just fund great community events
 - I think you do a great job and have a suite of interesting and targeted programs just the times can be difficult to access when you work full time
 - Since moving here, two years ago, I have found medical services very poor and difficult to access several services including high quality GP and specialist services. Why should the elderly in Hervey Bay have to go to the Sunshine Coast or Brisbane for treatment?
 - Provide a wide variety of events that cater to different interests. Keep costs for residents to a minimum
 - Funding for health and wellness activities eg at parks and the Tree house
 - Farmers market
 - Looking at loneliness of elderly
 - More service providers to assist older residents to stay in own home
 - Reach out to people, ask what is needed and develop plans/introduce ideas to address issues. And just be kind to each other! Understanding and empathy goes a long way
 - Foster better attitude in young people Focus more on people than money Continue the range of opportunities for non-drinking, non athletic residents social activities
 - I think there are a lot of people doing it really tough at the moment. A concerted effort to address the homelessness should be top priority, along with some sort of food aid again, consolidated. Good GPs will also make a lot of difference and we don't appear to be offering much to make them come and stay here
 - Support and information groups, facilitate discussion, like death cafes, and health groups like cooking classes or art groups
 - More programs
 - Make housing affordable
 - Try and arrange to have the free Newspaper delivered in the Urangan area to keep us informed
 - Offer programs to connect different ages and include ways to bring all sexes together
 - Community gardens
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Appendix A

- Classes for the "building blocks" of life - such as healthy cooking, basic exercise or financial management but for different phases of life. For example: money tip for moving out of home, how to cook for one, how to cook for a expanding family with kids at different ages. I think well-being in general is evolving depending on the stage or phase of our lives, and that needs different tips and ideas on how to be assisted through this phase
 - Gatherings in local areas
 - In house social support for people, my friend has no one but me, it's sad. She is a life long heavy drinker.. her words.. darling I'm a highly functioning alcoholic. Then cheers me. Well now she is 70s and has lived with MS through this.... Now it's all caught up to her and she is lonely . A visitor for people know in the community like this would be awesome 🍷
 - Continuty of connection
 - Be kinder
 - Promote healthy habits, promote community participation
 - Listen and then act
 - Provide lots of different opportunities with lots of different topics, ranging from large to small groups. Encourage non-competitive environment
 - Complete the Mary2Bay rail trail
 - Enhance disability relief/respite for parents Advocate for funding for hospitals and other services to support those with mental health concerns Support for families with challenging children/teenagers Continue the great work of the community navigators
 - Doing a great job here!!!
 - Promote a 'Wellness' pack, get BNTAC - Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation involved in a 'Welcome Pack' to Butchulla Country on the Fraser Coast, support a Wellness Alliance/Network, we need more change makers with great ideas, and positive people willing to help this place and people move forward in a positive way, raising the vibration of spiritual conciousness of people ... let just do it now - please!
 - Ensure ultra large vehicles and smaller vehicles are given separate parking areas where-ever possible. If you are jammed in by two behemoth vehicles you can not see to reverse safely
 - Separate walkways from bikes on esp. to make it safer
 - Do more to reach out to the less socially (digitally) connected; it's so much harder now without a weekly paper newspaper, people are even more isolated. It would be nice, too, if the local 7 TV news had more positive stories; they are always filling people with fear (about burglaries etc that are not so bad as made out) which is so damaging. Many older people are afraid to go out these days, because of these stories
 - More mental health initiatives in the region- the wait lists are too long and people are at capacity. People also cannot afford counselling due to cost of living. Have a community health and wellness day where everyone can attend and try out activities and find help. Promote a culture in community of talking about mental health and wellbeing and the importance of life balance
- 



Appendix A


- Start by policing the hoons on the roads and e-scooter riders using the roads and walkways
 - Check on oldies if they need transport etc. Be more strict with developers so they build amenable estates not just pack as many in as possible with narrow roads
 - Practice Mindfulness... Be Mindful... Pause... Connect!
 - Have more events targeting community members
 - Encourage neighbour to connect with neighbours
 - Not the community's responsibility
 - Ensure affordable medical services
 - Targeted programmes for different health and wellbeing initiative
 - More things to do for youth
 - We have older community members who need access to carer services
 - Once again.... there are so many opportunities to get help, to engage and have a great life in our community. One must make an effort to embrace that which is given!
 - Mind their own business
 - More counseling services or family services for older people
 - Having more family friendly events
 - Exercise equipment in each area for adults I.e Toogoom, Dundowran Beach
 - Hervey Bay desperately needs low rent housing for older single women!! All other needs are secondary to having a safe affordable (i.e. 30% maximum of the pension/ Centrelink payments) home. HBNC need to prioritise and work with local council and state/ federal governments to make this happen now!!
 - I think it is so hard to get help at home when looking after a person with a disability when you don't qualify for aged care and NDIS doesn't approve either, yet my husband is bed bound, unable to stand or walk and I can't get the assistance I need
 - Join sporting/ social groups
 - Community fitness classes
 - Listen to the oldies when they try and tell people what they need. Dismissing them as idiots doesn't help at all
 - Need more counselling and Physiotherapy people in our area
 - Cheaper access to basic exercise, mindful classes including on line for those of us who can't drive and have no public transport available
 - Not the community responsibility. Lots of groups in Hb
 - Maybe hold small events in the parks of the suburbs
 - More opportunities to connect with others, free mindfulness activities, well-being checks
 - Transport
 - Free accessible exercise groups of an evening
- 



Appendix A

Bundaberg Wellbeing Survey 2023

Full comments on what Bundaberg residents think is needed to improve community connectedness:


- I am a new resident and employed in Bundaberg and have witnessed unprovoked attacks on the elderly, aggressive road rage incidents, I'm very concerned as to whether I build here or keep my nest egg and build somewhere safer
 - Swimmers - anywhere we can swim with our dogs. Retirees by themselves dogs play a huge part in our wellbeing and often go everywhere with us
 - Promote interest groups through social media more often
 - Improve equality around housing accessibility and income
 - Keep businesses going and bring in new businesses to improve job availability. People need to feel a sense of worthiness
 - Listen to the community
 - Provide more affordable information access to low income residents
 - Community fun days
 - More groups
 - More open community functions with low cost entry for families and pensioners
 - People that actually care for the people of Bundaberg that work for the council
 - Have a street party
 - More listening, art music. To be inclusive of all
 - I don't really know am at a loss for ideas, maybe trivia events during the day at , am tea or pm tea ?
 - Community centre with free activities like game board night or cards etc
 - More community notice boards to let residents know what is going on and what help is available
 - Stop voting for parties that want medicare cut or abolished. That freeze bulk billing incentives for doctors. That freeze pension payments. That have contempt for the majority of Australians. That don't spread misinformation & lies through a right wing biased media
 - Nothing really, plenty of organisations, clubs, etc so you can be as connected as you want to be
 - Offer more event's cheaper
 - Teen-y/a activities (music based)
 - Reduce prices on council owned properties for legitimate non profit groups
 - Housing and cost of living assistance
 - Getting any message out into the community more
 - Support people groups that are forming with free rent of council buildings. Make areas more accessible
 - I'm new to Bundaberg so I am unsure of what's about. I don't always find google searches helpful so maybe that
 - Improve telecommunications
 - Welfare checks
- 



Appendix A


- More community groups that meet weekly
- Public transport for rural areas
- Nothing. It is an individual's responsibility
- Really Listen to each other
- Control crime
- Get the new hospital built asap. More infrastructure Develop Northside as there is a opportunity for a large shopping complex with restaurants and a dining out/ entertainment precinct to bring community together - family friendly
- Offer more free events
- More community events with easy access and not on the coast for those who live west of Bundaberg
- More help for those who need it not the ones playing the system and pretending to need help when they do not
- Give hall public insurance so that community days and exercise and social events can happen here in Elliott heads. The bus only goes in mornings so can't attend days in town to meet new people or join activities. We could form social connections
- There should be more venues available and easily accessible that are friendly and lower in cost. Meeting places for all ages, and well attended by staff to provide out let's and avenues for self appreciation and communicating with others. The arts would be a good theme
- Improve public transport to its outer areas like Coonarr, Moore Park and Burnett Heads
- More free family events
- All events cater for young and healthy people not for older disabled people
- For Autistic people like myself, have Autistic support groups for adults
- More community activities for health like yoga in the park, box excise
- Support groups

Full comments on what Bundaberg residents think is needed to improve community wellbeing:

- I think the community is under so much pressure with financial problems, drug and alcohol fueled violence and homelessness
 - Vote for a council that works for all the community and is transparent in all it's decision that affects community
 - More swimming facilities, perhaps a netted area for safety?
 - Support more venues like cafes and social hubs where people can get together socially for coffee and/or physical exercise
 - Become more caring and connected. Be more thoughtful and helpful
 - Go back to basics and love thy neighbour. Encourage the Christmas neighbourhood street party etc
 - Loving the free exercise programs. Wish they had some near Coral Cove
 - Attract MANY more medical specialists & specialist facilities to the Bundaberg area
 - Checking in on each other
- 



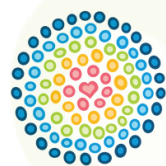
Appendix A

- Well being of elderly
 - More in home care employees for aged care
 - Council needs to start working for the people of Bundaberg not for the council
 - Be more welcoming to new arrivals
 - The Bundaberg Regional Council needs to survey the impacts that the unofficial off leash areas, at Elliott Heads. The community is not happy with our beautiful river being used by off leash dogs. It Has manifested, lots of stress and anxiety, with many community members I know, including myself.
 - Exercise type equipment in parks / gardens , similar to what Hervey Bay has on the esplanade, then you can use when you are able , Botanic Gardens would be a great venue over Northside as we have nothing much except the heart stay track which is not always open
 - Check on your neighbour
 - The community itself cannot do a lot however our community desperately needs more Doctors and local access to professionals such as psychologists etc on a more regular basis
 - Bring people together more
 - Advertise support
 - Volunteer
 - Housing and cost of living assistance
 - Encourage people to move more with cheaper programs
 - Free talks and information sessions
 - People are really doing it tough. Housing is a big issue - the rental market is bananas. Can the council do more to assist with food and shelter? Maybe there are empty factories that can be converted to shelters - surely there's something.....
 - Come together in groups on a regular basis
 - Welfare checks
 - Provide a greener town. Stop landlords from clearing tree cover. Council plant and water trees to replace the many that have been cut down recently
 - Public transport for rural areas
 - Open spaces. Green spaces. Build a new suburb?, ensure open space. Encourage individual responsibility
 - Be patient, and look at all the differences within each other, and embrace them
 - Control crime
 - Employ more Doctors, nurses, emergency services personnel and allied health professionals - preferably with English as their first language
 - Provide support for those in need
 - Check in on neighbours, however we don't have neighbours close by
 - Help with housing
 - We could have community meeting place that supports connections. We could support others and be more resilient and respond to community needs and fundraising days for local fire /ses/ surf lifesavers and have more fun!
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Appendix A

- Involve everyone in things more. Encourage people to share more
 - More access to wellbeing programs
 - Availability of neurodivergent affirming supports for disability. It is very limited. Autistic people aren't supported well by mainstream mental health supports
 - More healthy options for food in shopping centres
 - Offer more support groups
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HBNC

Creating Connected Communities

