



**Better health,  
Better lifestyles,  
Stronger communities**



**QUALITY  
ACCOUNT**  
2018-19

# About us

**Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS) is Gippsland's largest community health agency. We are secular and not-for-profit.**

We operate from more than 40 sites in Victoria and employ about 1000 staff. Our purpose is to deliver services that improve the health and wellbeing of Australians. We are inspired by a vision of strong, vibrant communities where more people enjoy good health and lead fulfilling lives.

Our values are our compass – they guide our decision-making and drive our performance in providing high quality, community-based health care. We value excellent customer service; going the extra distance; creating a successful environment; and acting with the utmost integrity. Our staff live these values every day.

At Latrobe Community Health Service, we pride ourselves on the delivery of truly integrated health services. We provide coordinated general practice (GP), nursing, allied health, dental, counselling and carer support services.

Our origins are in Gippsland in regional Victoria, but we have grown rapidly in recent years. Latrobe Community Health Service provides GP services in metropolitan Melbourne.

We also provide planning and early childhood early intervention services for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and offer home care packages for older people across the state of Victoria. In 2018-19, we began operating nationally; as of May 2019 we provide Veterans' Home Care assessment and coordination services across 11 regions in Western Australia.



## Locations across Victoria

- Ararat
- Bacchus Marsh
- Ballarat
- Bairnsdale
- Bannockburn
- Bayswater
- Benalla
- Box Hill
- Bright
- Camperdown
- Churchill
- Colac
- Corryong
- Chirnside Park
- Doncaster
- Dandenong
- Daylesford
- Edenhope
- Geelong
- Hamilton
- Hawthorn
- Hopetoun
- Horsham
- Mansfield
- Moe
- Morwell
- Mount Waverley
- Narre Warren
- Nhill
- Pakenham
- Port Fairy
- Portland
- Queenscliff
- Ringwood
- Sale
- Stawell
- Torquay
- Traralgon
- Wangaratta
- Warragul
- Warrnambool
- Wodonga
- Wonthaggi
- Yackandandah

## Acknowledging our traditional owners

Latrobe Community Health Service acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the country on which our sites across Victoria are located, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.



# A message from our Board Chair & CEO



**Ben Leigh**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Mark Biggs**  
Board Chairperson

**Everyone has the right to expect and receive consistently high quality healthcare, when and where they need it. Latrobe Community Health Service is proud of its longstanding reputation as a quality healthcare provider.**

As we continue our core business of delivering clinically sound and evidence-based care, we have spent much of 2018-19 embracing innovation, the use of technology, and initiating new programs to strengthen the experience and health outcomes of our clients.

Throughout this Quality Account are examples of our activities behind-the-scenes, which have taken place on the back of our commitment to continuous improvement. You'll read of how everyone at Latrobe Community Health Service is responsible for monitoring and responding to risks - within both the operational and clinical settings - and how we obtain feedback from staff and clients to inform the quality and safety of our services.

A highlight of 2018-19 is the establishment of our Consumer and Community Participation Committee, which will strengthen the way we understand and address the collective healthcare experience of our clients and community members.

The purpose of this Quality Account is to demonstrate to you - our community - how we actively work towards better client outcomes and zero avoidable harm.

Whether it be the use of video conferencing technology to remove the physical barriers of accessing healthcare or the creation of a new mental health team that assists people involved in the corrections system, we ensure each and every one of our services is backed by a robust clinical governance framework.

We are committed to the psychological and physical safety of our staff and our clients. We will continue to review the way we do things to ensure we deliver services to the highest and safest standard.

As we grow our service offerings in Gippsland, across Victoria and interstate, we remain confident we have laid the right foundations to achieve safe, effective, accountable and person-centred care.

**Ben Leigh**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Mark Biggs**  
Board Chairperson

# Consumer, carer and community participation

## Patient experience

### Measuring client outcomes

Achieving positive client outcomes demonstrates excellence in service provision. At Latrobe Community Health Service, we know in order to provide service excellence, we need to firstly understand whether we are achieving genuine outcomes for our clients.

This year our executive team endorsed five key health outcomes, which can be applied across the organisation's broad range of programs.

These will be used to measure whether we are meeting the health needs and wants of our clients.

### The five health outcomes are:

1. Improved or maintained physical health
2. Improved or maintained mental health
3. Improved or maintained social connection or participation
4. Improved or maintained functioning
5. Achievement of client's or participant's goals.

decked out  
works by headspace participants



**Pictured:** Kristi Lowrie and Christian Atwater, headspace Morwell staff.

This suite of client outcomes aligns with our purpose of improving the health and social wellbeing of Australians, and will act as a tool to track how we're going and where we can improve. We are measuring these outcomes to ensure we are consistently providing individualised, client-centred care backed by the evidence that shows which health interventions work best.

### Removing physical barriers

When people walk into a Latrobe Community Health Service site or receive a service in their kinder, school or home, they aren't asked 'what's the matter with you?' - they are asked 'how can we help?' We are committed to building the ability of all of our clients so they can participate fully and effectively in their healthcare.

We empower people to own their health journey through prevention, education and early intervention. We remove the barriers of physically getting to a health centre by embracing the use of video conferencing technology. We reduce the amount of time people spend waiting for their appointments so they can receive the healthcare they need sooner.



**Pictured:** CEO, Ben Leigh and Executive Director Aged & Community Care, Alison Skeldon during National Reconciliation Week.





**Pictured:** Our recently appointed Oral Health Educators at Latrobe Community Health Service.



In 2018-19, we trialled the use of video conferencing technology in two NDIS service areas where we provide planning services.

These trials took place in Wimmera South West and Outer Gippsland and were held in collaboration with the National Disability Insurance Agency and our Information, Communication and Technology department. We built a secure video conferencing system so we could hold NDIS planning meetings with people who found it difficult to get to a physical site.

People accessing the service told us the video conferencing option saved hours of travel and the discomfort of sitting for long periods. They were able to build a rapport sooner with our staff because they could see our staff instead of just hearing them over the phone. People said they felt comfortable and relaxed throughout the planning process as they were in their own surroundings.

Evaluation and feedback has shown this is a worthwhile option for many people with NDIS plans. We have developed procedures, work instructions and an evaluation tool; trained all of our NDIS staff; and set up video conferencing equipment at each site across Victoria.

We will offer 'virtual' planning meetings from all of our NDIS service areas - where we provide Local Area Coordination and Early Childhood Early Intervention services - from July 2019.

Historically, people have waited a long time to access general dental care in the public health system. By the time they reach the top of the waiting list, their dental needs usually multiply and become more complex.

This means people typically need more than one appointment. In order to buck the ongoing cycle of dental disease, Latrobe Community Health Service has transformed its delivery of dental care.

When people first come in for dental care, they attend a group information session to find out how dental services work at Latrobe Community Health Service and how they can prevent dental disease, such as decay.

They then attend a one-on-one session with an oral health educator, who provides individualised information so our clients can improve their oral hygiene and maintain healthy teeth at home.

Our clients then see an oral health therapist or dental therapist for a comprehensive dental check-up and clean before they attend an appointment with a dentist to finish their required treatment.

These changes wouldn't have been possible without adequately training our staff. We up-skilled five of our dental assistants to provide oral health education and empower more people to look after their own health.

### **Breaking down language barriers**

Everyone has the right to make fully informed decisions about their health. Latrobe Community Health Service recognises effective communication is the key to ensuring this happens.

Our staff members are trained to recognise when a person may need the use of an interpreter in order to be informed of their rights; be able to give informed consent; and fully comprehend critical information that relates to their health and wellbeing.

We access interpreters through the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service. Latrobe Community Health Service is also the provider of the Gippsland Auslan Interpreting Service.

Our clients can access interpreting services either over-the-phone, via video link, or face-to-face.

### **Creating employment opportunities for people with disability**

Latrobe Community Health Service is an equal opportunity employer that promotes a diverse and inclusive workplace. We consider all qualified applicants for employment. We are partnered with JobAccess, which helps people with disability find and keep jobs, get promoted to better jobs, and upgrade or expand their workplace skills.

We have pledged to Soldier On in recognition of the skills, leadership and training of those who have served Australia. We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and identities, people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ+), people with a lived experience of disability, and service personnel and their families.

We have developed a procedure outlining a consistent approach to our recruitment, selection and induction of people with disability, and continue to attend forums and community events to ensure we are viewed as an employer of choice and one which values diversity. We have engaged WorkFocus Australia, which delivers the JobAccess services on behalf of the Australian Government. This is a 12-month partnership aimed at building our capacity to further support disability in our workplace.

We seek advice and support from JobAccess and other organisations to ensure we make reasonable adjustments for our employees with disabilities. We continue to support staff who identify as having a disability and provide them with specialist training and equipment as needed. Latrobe Community Health Service provides job seekers with disabilities the opportunity to 'job shadow' for a day by conducting work experience with our Local Area Coordination staff.

Each of Latrobe Community Health Service's sites has been selected or adapted to ensure ease of access to buildings and facilities for people with disability. Fifteen percent of staff we employ in our NDIS services live with a disability.

As a community partner in the NDIS, we work alongside people with disabilities to determine what kind of support and equipment they need to achieve their goals and live the life of their choosing. Not only do we consider an individual's goals in their personal and community life, but we encourage each person to consider further training, work experience and employment opportunities. Everyone has the right to contribute economically to their community.

#### **Improving quality of care for people with disability**

We are acutely aware that determining an individual's goals is the first step to achieving meaningful and fulfilling participation in their community. The next step is ensuring each person's NDIS plan is helping them to live the life they envision.

Latrobe Community Health Service actively measures the quality of care we provide people when developing, monitoring and reviewing their NDIS plans.

We assess ourselves against five quality indicators. These ensure people who are eligible for the NDIS:

- Have timely access to planning and early intervention services
- Achieve at least 70 percent of the goals stated within their NDIS plan
- Agree that their NDIS plan is helping them to achieve their goals
- Start accessing their funded supports within four weeks of the National Disability Insurance Agency approving their NDIS plan
- Are satisfied with the planning and early intervention services we provide.

These indicators maintain a level of accountability in our delivery of NDIS services, and ensure we continue to improve how we help people with NDIS plans achieve their goals.




**Pictured:** Latrobe Community Health Service staff celebrate International Day of People with Disability in Ballarat.



# Quality and safety



We view all feedback as an integral part of continually improving our services. We believe everyone has a right to express an opinion about our services.

 **Pictured:** Quality and safety are integral in any clinical health setting.

We regularly seek feedback in various ways. Feedback is sought informally through one-on-one conversations and more formally through regular client surveys across our many services. We ensure clients are aware of their right to provide feedback through providing and discussing our Rights and Responsibilities brochure with all clients, our website, in our reception areas and during conversations.

This year we implemented an online form on our website to make providing feedback easier for our clients and the community. In 2018-19, we received 249 compliments, and 204 complaints.

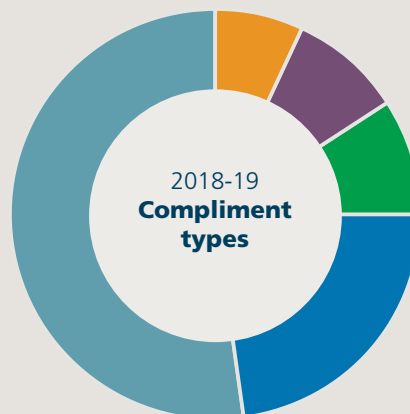
## Compliments






The majority of compliments we received related to the information and ongoing care we provide our clients.

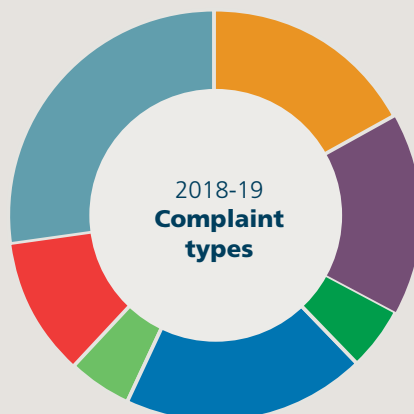
## Complaints








We take all complaints seriously and thoroughly investigate them. We aim to have complaints dealt with and resolved within 30 days, with an acknowledgement letter sent and contact being maintained with the person throughout the entire process.

Outcomes and improvements are also reported back to relevant parties.



-  Access 7%
-  Administration 9%
-  Assessment 9%
-  Information access 23%
-  Ongoing care 52%



-  Access 17%
-  Administration 16%
-  Assessment 5%
-  Conduct 19%
-  Environment 5%
-  Information access 11%
-  Ongoing care 27%

## Accreditation

We follow a structured governance reporting process and meet all external accreditation requirements. We hold accreditation against the following standards:

- Quality Improvement Council Health and Community Services
- Human Services
- National Safety and Quality Health Service
- Commonwealth Home Care
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (for our Morwell, Traralgon, Warragul, Churchill, William Angliss and Latrobe University General Practice Clinics)
- Victorian Early Childhood Intervention.

In 2018-19 we were assessed against, and met all expected outcomes, of the following standards:

- Quality Improvement Council Health and Community Services
- Human Services
- National Safety and Quality Health Service, and
- Victorian Early Childhood Intervention.

Our general practices in Traralgon, Churchill and Warragul sites were assessed against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioner Standards for the first time and met all expected outcomes. Our Morwell general practice was also assessed as meeting all expected outcomes.

Improvement opportunities that are identified during our assessment against each standard are implemented through our Quality Improvement Plan, which ensures we are continually improving the services we provide.



**Pictured:** Participants in the Leadership Development Program.

## Staff feedback

Staff feedback is crucial for any organisation that is committed to building and maintaining a positive workplace culture.

At Latrobe Community Health Service, we regularly obtain staff feedback to understand our actual workplace culture and what we need to do to achieve positive relationships and staff satisfaction.

We conduct annual staff surveys, which provide a confidential platform for our employees to honestly and safely voice their views about their experience working at Latrobe Community Health Service.

From this feedback we identify common themes regarding the culture, quality and safety at Latrobe Community Health Service and establish staff focus groups to inform our organisational action plan.

**Our 2018-19 organisational action plan was based on the common themes that arose from our previous staff survey:**

- Keeping staff engaged
- Creating a safe environment
- Ensuring quality record keeping
- Fostering community engagement
- Providing excellent customer service
- Improve how we communicate internally.



*Case study:*

## Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported at work

**At Latrobe Community Health Service, we offer an Employee Assistance Program, which provides free, voluntary and highly confidential one-on-one counselling services for staff and family members.**

Our Employee Assistance Program is promoted at all Latrobe Community Health Service sites across Victoria and reinforced by managers and People, Learning and Culture staff during workplace visits and industrial matters. About 200 sessions were accessed across the organisation in 2018-19.

These sessions assisted employees with work matters, health and wellbeing, personal relationships, and grief and loss.







**Pictured:** Occupational Health and Safety Committee.



**Throughout 2018-19 we have:**

- Reviewed our reward and recognition model
- Implemented changes from the review:
  - We opened our staff reward nominations earlier
  - We renewed our focus on the promotion of 'kudos', our reward and recognition program
- Reviewed our policies and procedures database and removed duplicate or redundant documents
- Implemented recommendations from a review of our internal communications
- Selected 73 staff members to undergo a leadership development program.

**In 2018 we conducted our annual Best Practice Australia staff engagement survey.**

This survey and subsequent staff focus groups identified three main themes:

- Retention of quality staff
- Appropriate remuneration for responsibilities held
- Workloads that are fair and equitable.

We are now developing a new organisational action plan for 2019-20 based on these three main themes.

**Occupational health and safety is everybody's responsibility**

At Latrobe Community Health Service the health and safety of staff, volunteers and clients is everybody's responsibility.

Our strong risk culture - where risk management is overseen by our board and maintained by all program areas - guarantees all risks are evaluated and monitored; incidents are promptly reported, responded to and resolved; staff complete mandatory training, and our clients receive high-quality and safe healthcare.

Our focus on health and safety doesn't stop there. Latrobe Community Health Service has an occupational health and safety committee that promotes and monitors safe work practices, environments and behaviours and consults with our employees.

This ensures our staff, volunteers, contractors and clients remain physically and psychologically safe.

The committee's work is informed by the organisation's three-year occupational health and safety plan, which aims to minimise work-related injuries and illnesses, help prevent unsafe work practices and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone at Latrobe Community Health Service.

Latrobe Community Health Service's occupational health and safety plan is supported by our organisational policy, procedure, issues resolution approach and incident management manual.



*Case study:*

**An incident occurred at one of our leased sites**

**A staff member tripped and fell on the floor, sustaining an injury.**

We supported the staff member with the provision of medical treatment and a return-to-work plan, and began negotiating the removal of the physical hazard with the landlord.

We requested permission to replace a movable mat with a permanent one that didn't present trip or slip risks. The affected staff member and their team indicated they were satisfied with the action we took to ensure their safety. This is just one example that demonstrates how we respond to occupational health and safety incidents and work to prevent future harm.

### Improving people's access to healthcare

It is well-known that people in the criminal justice system are more likely to experience mental illness. If we can address a person's mental health issues and ensure they receive the holistic support they need, then they will be much better-placed to reduce their risk of re-offending.

In 2018-19, Latrobe Community Health Service became one of five community health services in Victoria that are funded to operate a small, clinical mental health team to provide treatment and therapy for people on parole or on a Community Corrections Order. The newly-established Forensic Mental Health in Community Health Program is designed to provide holistic and coordinated, person-centred care for people whom the courts recommend seek mental health treatment and rehabilitation support.

Our mental health team is made up of mental health nurses, a mental health social worker and a psychologist who work closely with GPs and a mental

health nurse practitioner to assess and treat clients appropriately.

We have partnered with Corrections Victoria, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Gippsland Lakes Community Health Service, Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association and the Gippsland Primary Health Network to ensure each of our clients receive timely care that is suited to their culture and social and emotional wellbeing.

To date, we have received 86 referrals to the program; that's 86 people who are receiving the support they need to improve their mental health and reduce their likelihood of reoffending. This ultimately increases community safety.

Several clients have attained a stable mental state and can function independently, and will continue to engage with their GP under the supervision of Corrections Victoria after their contact with our team. The program is improving people's overall health status and their self-esteem; our team's holistic lens of care has generated several referrals to accommodation, employment, podiatry and dental services.

Another way we are improving access to healthcare is through our participation in The Orange Door. This crisis and family violence safety hub for all families within the Inner Gippsland area opened in November 2018. The hub is a collaboration between many Gippsland organisations with expertise in addressing family violence.

Latrobe Community Health Service is responsible for delivering perpetrator services. This is for men who use violence within the family setting. We provide case management services and run group psycho-education sessions for men's behaviour change.

The aim of this program is to challenge men's beliefs around their entitlement to power and control over women and children, and to shift long held cultural aspects of gendered inequality.



**Pictured:** Koorie Men's Behaviour Change Program workers with participants.

# Comprehensive Care

## Continuity

**Latrobe Community Health Service is Gippsland's largest community health agency. We have been delivering primary healthcare across the region for more than four decades.**

Our core business is in the delivery of coordinated general practice (GP), nursing, allied health, dental, counselling and carer support services, as well as in aged care and NDIS services. In 2018-19, we renewed our focus on achieving genuine integration of primary health services in the Latrobe Valley, where we began.

Research tells us genuine service integration allows people to receive high quality healthcare at the right time and place without needing to repeat their story again and again. When people access truly integrated healthcare, they experience a better quality of life.

As of February 2019, Latrobe Community Health Service has two integrated primary health service teams that operate in the Latrobe Valley and in part of Baw Baw. One 'cluster' operates from Warragul, Moe and Churchill, and the other operates in Morwell and Traralgon.

These clusters are made up of GP clinic services, district nursing and our full suite of allied health clinicians.

Our range of specialist services also now operate within one cluster, with staff working across our two integrated primary health service teams and in some cases, across Gippsland. Our specialist

services incorporate palliative care, paediatric services, a multidisciplinary sexual assault nursing program, forensic mental health in community health, and other speciality nursing services. We continue to deliver chronic disease management across our Latrobe Valley sites and our dementia nurse practitioner supports the entirety of Gippsland.

Building on from the goals of our primary health service integration, this year we piloted a model of healthcare for people with chronic and complex health conditions who frequently require medical attention, including at hospital. Our aim is to help people avoid being admitted to hospital by providing a holistic model of care based on the Department of Health's national Health Care Homes program.

Each person involved in our model has access to a dedicated care team consisting of their usual doctor, our

chronic disease nurse and a care coordinator. Our care team works together to develop a coordinated care plan and supports our clients in navigating the health system.

By developing a shared plan, the care team is better able to coordinate the client's care and help each person manage their condition proactively, within their own community. Our care coordinator visits clients in their home and will make regular phone calls to ensure they are getting the healthcare and other supports they need.

In doing so, people with chronic and complex conditions have the tools and advice to improve their health and enhance their quality of life, reducing the likelihood of hospitalisation. We will continue to review and refine this new model in 2019-20.



**Pictured:** Jess and Nina, Planned Activity Group clients.





**Pictured:** RAP committee at Latrobe Community Health Service.



At Latrobe Community Health Service, we are committed to helping the people who need us most. Our children's services team consists of allied health professionals who provide therapeutic interventions for children aged seven or younger with mild to moderate developmental delays. Our comprehensive approach involves a multi-disciplinary assessment of each child who then partakes in either group therapy or limited one-on-one sessions.

We hold information sessions for parents and carers so they are equipped to support their child's development, and we make referrals to other suitable services where necessary. In 2018-19, we accepted between 20 and 40 referrals each month. This demonstrates our ability to intervene early and provide continuity of care, so children have pathways to good health and are given the best possible start to their life.

### **Measuring and responding to the needs of our clients**

As a community health service that aims to improve the health of our communities, the provision of truly person-centred care that meets the needs of those we care for remains our priority. We are acutely aware we cannot empower people to own their health journey, nor can we achieve better health outcomes for our clients, if we disregard their feedback and don't ask them about their experience with us. Latrobe Community Health Service has stringent feedback policies and procedures in place, which ensure we adequately gather, review and respond to the needs of our clients. To strengthen this, in 2018-19 we

introduced a new way to encourage constructive engagement between our organisation and our consumers and local community members.

Our new Consumer and Community Participation Committee consists of four community representatives and three staff members who meet quarterly and report to both our executive and Board Quality and Safety Committee.

We introduced this committee as an avenue to obtain regular feedback about the collective experience of health consumers and community members, our clients' concerns and views, and the areas of our services that need improvement.

The committee also serves as an additional mechanism to engage with local consumer and community networks. Over 2018-19, the committee has reviewed:

- A selection of our Gippsland sites to ensure they're child-friendly
- Feedback about our facilities, including signage
- Our existing workforce training plans, with a focus on high-quality customer and clinical service
- Our accreditation process and potential actions for organisational improvement.

Rather than telling our clients what they need to do to access healthcare, we are asking them how we can help. We do this by holding annual surveys for different program areas and hosting consumer groups to hear our clients' views.

### **Responding to the views of young people**

Latrobe Community Health Service operates the headspace Morwell centre, a space where young people aged between 12 and 25 can go for advice, support and treatment regarding their mental health, drug and alcohol issues, general health, relationships or sexuality. Young people can drop into the centre at any time to use our computers and wifi or to have a hot drink and relax.

When they're ready to chat, we'll make an intake appointment to decide together how we can help. We aren't a centre staffed by older people who tell young people what to do; at headspace Morwell, we have several support groups and a committee of young volunteers who tell us what we're doing well and what we can do better.

Our Youth Reference Group meets fortnightly to discuss centre activities and events, such as which events we attend and how we run them. The members also provide input into decision making at the centre, including new initiatives.

In 2018-19, our Youth Reference Group and our clients told us:

- There was a lack of recovery and group support for young people after they underwent acute or intensive treatment for alcohol and other drugs
- There was little-to-no group-based support for young people with mental health concerns
- It's hard to access peer support locally.

As a result, headspace Morwell has implemented two new groups for young people in 2018-19.

'The Buzz' is a group for young people aged 16-25 who are seeking support and assistance with their current or past use of alcohol and other drugs. The Buzz meets weekly, with members benefiting from evidence-based theories, mindfulness and generalist support.

ABSDtract is a group for young people aged between 12 and 25 who'd like information and support about mental health issues such as anxiety, bullying, stress or depression. The group meets weekly, focusing on a topic each time, with headspace Morwell clinicians and youth workers facilitating each session.

Together with the Youth Reference Group, headspace Morwell staff are busy developing a peer support group for young people, which will start in 2019-20.

### **Providing a social network to people with a mental illness**

People who are aged between 18 and 64 who are living with a prolonged mental illness can access an interactive, community-based program at Latrobe Community Health Service. Our Creative Club program provides respite for carers by delivering socially-inclusive activities for people with enduring mental illnesses. Our activities are designed to provide psycho-social, recreational and pre-vocational opportunities, and achieve greater participation in the community.

Each year, we ask for our clients' feedback via a survey they can complete with the help of their carer, relative or friend. We then collate the feedback we receive to inform the planning and design of future activities and services.

This year, we ran a bushwalking program at local national parks after clients told us they wanted to get fitter by going on more walks. We also made regular trips to fresh produce markets and our health promotion officer ran an educational program that helps families to eat healthily and save money on their grocery shop; this was based on clients wanting to learn more about cooking and creating a budget plan.

People tell us they feel safe and protected when attending Creative Club activities, and they enjoy experiences they wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to if they weren't involved in the program. By offering our clients the opportunity to give honest feedback often, we empower them to own their health journey and feel confident to speak up about what matters to them.

### **Creating culturally safe environments across Gippsland**

Accessing mainstream services often presents many barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A 2013 research survey found almost a third of respondents experienced racism in health settings, and that a common response to experiencing racism was to subsequently avoid similar situations - or health settings - in future. A common consequence when this happens in aged care is a delayed response to the needs of older Australians, which can contribute to complex or chronic conditions and, in some cases, shorter life expectancy.

In 2019, Latrobe Community Health Service's Aboriginal Regional Development Officer began a cultural safety project aimed at encouraging Gippsland's home and community care organisations to provide culturally inclusive environments for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Latrobe Community Health Service invited organisations that provide services via the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home and Community Care for Younger People to apply for a small grant to buy or commission artwork created by a local Aboriginal artist. Successful applicants will then display the artwork in their public reception or foyer areas, providing a powerful first impression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We know visual acknowledgement of culture helps to demonstrate inclusiveness and may pave the way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to feel welcome and safe in that

space. Further, by working with the local Aboriginal community to develop a piece of artwork that is meaningful and appropriate, organisations are better able to demonstrate their cultural sensitivity and awareness, and Aboriginal people are more likely to use that service.

The 'Gippsland Aboriginal Cultural Safety Project – Artwork' is an initiative of the Gippsland Sectoral Development team, which is jointly supported by the Department of Health and the Department of Health and Human Services. Nineteen organisations successfully applied for the grants. Our Aboriginal Regional Development Officer is now working with these organisations and their local Aboriginal communities to make mutual introductions and begin the artwork consultation process.

Gippsland Multicultural Services has recently celebrated the completion of their project. The organisation commissioned Gunai artist Ronald Edwards-Pepper to produce a culturally-appropriate piece, and invited him to share the story of his artwork with their staff and clients. One client, who has lived in Australia for 57 years, remarked it was the first time she'd heard any story of the local Aboriginal people.

In commissioning this artwork, Gippsland Multicultural Services intends to encourage greater interaction between Aboriginal and immigrant elders so they can learn each other's stories and both population groups feel safe to access their space.

Displaying culturally-appropriate artwork may not solve the real or perceived issues in service provision for Aboriginal people, but instilling a welcoming environment is a good first step.

Our hope is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will feel comfortable accessing home and community care in Gippsland, and in turn, local organisations will be able to respond to their needs sooner.

# Feedback

**Latrobe Community Health Service values your feedback - it helps us to improve our services and the way we engage with the communities we serve.**

When you provide feedback to Latrobe Community Health Service, you can expect:

- Your privacy to be protected
- To be listened to with respect
- To have someone represent you with your complaint if you wish and consent
- To have your cultural and communication needs included
- To be actively involved in the process and be asked how you would like to have your concern resolved
- To be kept informed of the progress of your complaint
- Not to be charged to make a complaint. It is free.
- To receive correspondence from us explaining the resolution of your complaint and our reasons for those decision/s
- To be informed of how you can request a review of our decision/s.

We invite your feedback on our services and our 2018-19 Quality Account.

You can contact us via the following methods:

**Phone**

1800 242 696

**Mail to**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Quality Officer

Latrobe Community Health Service

Reply Paid 960

MORWELL VIC 3840

**Email**

feedback@lchs.com.au

**Online**

[www.lchs.com.au/complaints-and-compliments](http://www.lchs.com.au/complaints-and-compliments)

Visit us at any of our sites.



**Pictured:** Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds train in coffee making.





1800 242 696 • [www.lchs.com.au](http://www.lchs.com.au)

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