

Submission to the Productivity Commission into Mental Health

-headspace Bundaberg works-

Young People tell us that headspace works

Headspace provides a service that is specifically for them- youth specific, non-judgemental,

confidential and safe

Firstly, I would like to thank the Productivity Commission for undertaking such an important review of the mental health service sector. Secondly, thank you for the opportunity to provide submissions to the Productivity Commission so as to inform them of identified needs and service gaps specific to our service area.

Where would we all be without the 'youth specific' health service – headspace? Nationally recognised and regarded, headspace has a proven track record when it comes to delivering localised, youth specific, low to moderate mental health services. The strengths of the headspace platform as a place-based service that provides an integrated, holistic care through delivery of a range of supports. Each headspace centre is more than just a service supporting the 12-25 age cohort with mental health issues, it is a community based, service with a 'no wrong door' approach that supports young people, their families and the wider community in the areas of mental health, sexual health, drug and alcohol and education and vocational support.

There is a degree of misunderstanding of the localisation of headspace centres and how embedded they are in local communities. Each headspace centre has a consortium made up of local organisations providing both direct and indirect support and guidance to the centre. The consortia ensure the community gets the 'best bang for the buck' (optimum productivity and cost effective) as it provides relevant knowledge, guidance, feedback and in-kind support specific to the local community needs. The importance of headspace in the Bundaberg cannot be underestimated as it was created by locals, based upon the localised needs. The headspace Bundaberg has a total of 15 member organisations making up the consortia. This is a local partnership that provides strategic direction the centre. All member organisations are well respected and regarded and each has 'but in' and committed to the headspace model.

Being a 'youth specific' health service requires direct input from those utilising the service – the young people. Young people must be meaningfully engaged and partnered with. Our Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) were involved right from the start and continue to be extremely valuable in providing feedback and recommendations to the centre manager and consortia to drive service delivery. This also ensures the community is getting the best value for the funding as services are tailor made to the specific youth needs of the community. headspace is deeply embedded in local communities - the headspace model is responsive and flexible to local needs. Headspace Bundaberg is inclusive and responds to the community needs and supports the community in ways other organisations are unable to. Bundaberg headspace provides a safe, supportive and friendly environment to the growing number of young people identifying as LGBTI+. Bundaberg is a very conservative community and this cohort of young people often feel isolated and judged. This has detrimental impacts upon their mental health and sadly, their prospects of employment.

Youth mental health system reform will only work if it is undertaken with young people at its core. Young people who attend headspace centres are encouraged to provide feedback of issues facing young people today to headspace National Office. This feedback drives the service delivery based upon the relevance of the requirements of youth. Headspace is in tune with the needs of the nation's youth and is best place to be directly involved in developing any youth specific mental health services indicated but the Productivity Commission. The headspace brand works for young people because it was informed by them and continues to evolve with them.

Young people are satisfied with the service and are achieving positive outcomes. Bundaberg headspace provides approximately 400 occasions of service every month. This dramatically reduces the pressure upon acute care services, GP's, community counselling services and school-based support services. Low intensity supports are always appropriate for young people. The use of micro counselling skills including engagement, active listening, validation and reflection and Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy are cost effective and proven methods in reducing psychological distress. This is another reason why the headspace Model works.

Bundaberg headspace has seen a steady increase in the numbers as community confidence continues to grow. In response to a community need, Bundaberg headspace has extended its hours of operation to encourage the older age group (18-25 years) to access services.

Another program that is extremely important – particularly in Bundaberg which has the second highest level of unemployment in Qld, is the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program. The Productivity Commission must be aware that people with poor mental health have the highest incidence of unemployment and lower educational levels. The IPS is a valuable program embedded into a number of headspace centres throughout Australia. To reduce morbidity levels of mental illness through early detection and intervention, headspace centres are the ideal, proven and nationally respected and regarded platforms to deliver this program. Job network agencies do not have the expertise to identify and intervene with young people seeking employment – headspace does. By reducing the mental distress and providing early intervention, the outcome can only be favourable – People with improved psychological functioning, improved mental health literacy and lower levels of unemployment. This is a must if productivity is to improve. Our Prime Minister Mr. Scott Morrison himself noted 'the best form of welfare is employment'.

Having worked and managed within the public health mental health service and similar Non-Government organisations, I can say that whilst these services promote the fact, they actively engage consumers in service delivery, in comparison to the headspace model – they do not. The headspace model is built on partnering with, empowering and giving voice to young people. Young people and their families and friends must be partners in service design and delivery. Bundaberg headspace has the YEC to provide the consumer and youth perspective. The centre has a 'Family and Friends' group that also meets monthly. The concerns of the family and friends are heard and validated in a safe, secure and supportive forum. Topics such as 'deliberate self-harm', 'sexuality and gender', 'suicidality' and 'My Adolescent' are discussed and modulated by clinical staff. Often consenting young people attend these sessions and provide the family and friends with real lived experiences to assist in understanding. With the exception of headspace, there is limited engagement with young people and their families and friends. Again, the Productivity Commission should take into account the voices and lived experiences of young people in any youth mental health reform. It would be recommended that the Productivity Commission include a recommendation for co-design/co-production of services with young people and their family and friends.

To allow headspace to continue to provide the valuable services already in place and increase and improve service delivery, may I also recommend the removal of quarantining of funds for headspace. The withholding of finances makes it harder for young people to seek and access help and gives commissioning bodies the 'choice' of which services young people can access rather than the consumers - young people. It is unfortunate that there is a misunderstanding of;

- the strengths of the headspace platform, especially the localisation of headspace centres and how embedded they are in local communities;
- the extent of engagement with young people and their families and friends;
- the significant impacts that the timing of first onset of mental disorders in adolescence and early adulthood can have on a young person's life; and
- the importance of any reform of mental health to specifically comprise youth mental health

Below is a summary of the impact and effectiveness of headspace

Access

☑ Since inception, headspace has supported more than 520,000 young people with 3 million services.

☑ In the last year alone, 99,892 young people received support via headspace centres, including:

- o 9,045 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- o 10,940 Cultural and Linguistically Diverse young people
- o 25,463 young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Satisfaction

☑ Young people report high levels of satisfaction with our programs ranging from 85% for headspace, to 87% for headspace centres, and 94% for headspace Early Psychosis.

Awareness

☑ 77% of young Australians recognise headspace as a youth-specific mental health organisation. They know headspace is there for them.

Outcomes

☑ More than 62% of young people get better with headspace and this increases to 68% if they attend 5 or 6 sessions.

☑ Our longitudinal study of more than 1,900 young people found that:

o The majority of participants reported high or very high levels of psychological distress upon entry to headspace. All age groups reported a decrease in psychological distress (K10) while at headspace and most age groups reported further improvement after leaving.

o Participants experienced a decrease in the number of days they were unable to work or study while at headspace and these gains were maintained at the time of follow-up at 12 months.

o Most participants (84%) reported that headspace positively impacted their mental health literacy and helped them to better understand their mental health problems (86%). Participants also reported developing skills to deal with mental health issues, highlighting the important role that headspace plays in equipping young people with the tools and resources to better manage their day to day mental health.

o Importantly, 78% of participants reported that headspace had positively impacted on their work and study situation.

In conclusion, my submission aims to impress upon the Productivity Commissioners the value of headspace – particularly from the Bundaberg perspective. The submission notes the local focus of the service and that the needs of the community, family and friends and the youth are at the forefront of the service. A nationally recognised, Youth Mental Health service that is well respected and accessed with increasing numbers of young people - headspace works.

Submission to the Productivity Commission into Mental Health

Included are a couple of letters provided by consortia members and community organisations highlighting what Bundaberg would be like without headspace.

Respectively yours

Dean Hyland RN
Credentialed Mental Health Nurse
Centre Manager – headspace Bundaberg

1) – *STEPS Employment Solutions: - Consortia member organisation*

Headspace has provided an invaluable service to the youth of Bundaberg through their commitment and dedication to increase awareness and break down the stigma of mental health.

As a disability employment provider who work with this co-hort, it has been extremely helpful for us to be able to offer this service to our clients.



Jennifer Goodchild

Operations Manager - Bundaberg

Bundaberg Office

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2) – *Phoenix House: - Consortia member organisation*

Headspace has become a central part of our community. Without Headspace, there would be a very large gap for our young people to congregate and receive supports under supervised programs. The programs are tailed for our youth, in a city that does not have enough youth centered supports, to minimize, youth justice and drug and alcohol concerns. Headspace offer a medical model which has levitated the pressures from our already overcrowded hospitals. Furthermore, our mental health units at our hospitals, do not have the capacity to work with our youth, and they are left without any psychological supports, which would increase our already dismal successful youth suicides.

Regards

Dean Hyland – Centre Manager headspace Bundaberg

Jason Rushton | **Director of Services**

MSW(Hons) MA(Hons), PGDipSSS(Dist), BMil(Hons), BSW(Hon), Dip Com, Dip HR
AMHSW, AASW, ANZASW, RSW



3) – Bundaberg Regional Council

Hello there

What would Bundaberg be like without a Headspace?

‘Until Headspace became a resident of the Bundaberg region, the wait list for mental health and counselling for young people was inordinately long. Child and Youth Mental Health at the Bundaberg Base struggled to keep ahead of the demand. Counsellors who specialised in youth matters were few and far between, over-subscribed and lacking in skills to adequately address problems and issues. Headspace has made a very real positive contribution to Bundaberg by providing an inclusive, non-judgemental and safe environment for young people to share their anxieties, explore options and to gain support and advocacy around their issues’.

Kind regards

BEV DEVLIN

Community Development Officer



4)– Bundaberg & District Neighbourhood House - Consortia member organisation



HEADSPACE BUNDABERG - COMMUNITY IMPACT

Headspace Bundaberg was established around two and a half years ago as a solution for dealing with the mental health of youth in the region. Since its' establishment Headspace has provided valuable assistance to hundreds of young people in the Bundaberg community. It has built hope amongst youth and their families and, importantly, provided young people with the tools to navigate through difficult times.

It may be suggested that Headspace Bundaberg has reduced the rate of suicide among young people. The Neighbourhood Centre views Headspace as a valuable resource for youth at risk and has provided several referrals to Headspace over the past two years.

Dean Hyland – Centre Manager headspace Bundaberg

The community has seen Headspace Bundaberg grow to include other vital allied support services with monthly clientele growing substantially during the past twelve months. This shows a growing and ongoing need for the mental health services in the Bundaberg region.

Without the support services that Headspace Bundaberg offers, it is assumed that many young people would have nowhere to go for support and possibly could have resulted in self-harm in the worst case. Our observation is that young people feel at ease visiting Headspace Bundaberg. This in itself is a huge leap forward for the community as a whole.

Corrie McColl
Manager
Bundaberg Neighbourhood centre
17 December 2019

4) – *Open Door Support Services - Consortia member organisation*



When we look at the main social determinants of youth health needs in Bundaberg, identified in a recent PHN report, it is clear, that without the impact of emerging headspace services within the community, the diverse needs of Bundaberg's youth would be mostly unmet.

Bundaberg sits in the most disadvantaged quintile of the Queensland population which has a knock-on effect on a wide variety of identified local needs including education, employment and mental health.

Dean Hyland – Centre Manager headspace Bundaberg

Headspace is the only local service trying to address issues across these areas in an endeavour to support the mental health of our young community.

Bundaberg has one of the highest proportions of young people who did not complete Yr 8. Working with consortia members, headspace supports health literacy which has been shown to have strong associations with individuals' levels of education. Low levels of health literacy are associated with poor health outcomes including increased prevalence of chronic disease and reduced use of health services.

Without headspace Bundaberg's youth would have less opportunity to learn about their own holistic health.

Headspace is the only service in Bundaberg to actively support the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI) community where there is a higher prevalence of risk taking behaviours. Australia's Health 2018 reports that gay, lesbian and bisexual people are more likely to experience intimate partner violence and psychological distress, more likely to smoke cigarettes, consume unsafe levels of alcohol, engage in illicit drug use and unsafe sex practices.

Without headspace, Bundaberg would be a less BRITE community and potentially have few avenues for young people to explore destigmatizing activities

Bundaberg has been identified as having a relatively higher burden of mental health disorders observed across the LGA showing one of the highest rates of mental/behavioural problems and very high psychological distress. Approximately half of all lifetime mental health disorders emerge by age 14 and three quarters by age 24. Mental health problems and disorders account for the highest burden of disease among young people

Without headspace Bundaberg would be short of an important resource to support and develop change in a socially acceptable manner using evidence-based approaches and would not have any early intervention strategies for young people

Headspace provides a multi layered approach to early intervention, education, community engagement and social responsibility.

Bundaberg would be a less safe space for those in need of support, a little more ignorant to the needs of minorities and importantly, a little less welcoming to the worldwide community.

Yours in recovery,

Dave Facer