

Productivity Commission headspace Geraldton staff response:

Why is hs G important for this region?

A service that provides absolute flexibility in how it can meet the needs identified for our local community from a clinical and engagement perspective.

Is the service in town the entire community (many out of funding range) approaches to plan mental health support because we are able to be welcoming in a manner other services find difficult.

Only service providing clinical interventions for youth mental health early intervention in the Midwest. Geraldton itself due to economies of scale is now a large magnet for all people due to the centralisation of services from the Midwest.

Capacity to provide the level of support that is appropriate for each individual.

Collaboration and partnership potential is only limited by staffing capacity and budget ie. In this region collaboration with Clontarf, low social economic schools with vulnerable populations allows for the most at risk young people in this country especially young ATSI males to be engaged, educated and supported.

The service does not work within a silo due to many factors:

- Because it is new in concept.
- The model ensures collaboration and communication via the Consortium.
- Embedded Community Engagement practices that are as part of the licensee agreement.
- As staff working on the ground, it feels like a service that is community minded and works for its community.
- Unique population density yet isolated therefore servicing a vast and diverse population.

The capacity to be flexible and respond to community needs seems to be evident and limited only by creativity funding. The clinical governance and model fidelity enables an overarching framework of practice that proves clinical professional standards yet the reading of data results in community responses and needs.

- Create our own clinical pathways
- Self-referral is a key concept for yp.
- Community engagement
- Adaption of services is ongoing according to differing needs at any given time of the community and young people.
- Tailored health care and support can be instantaneous ie. Trauma responses, debriefing after sudden death for young people,
- Adaptable, responsive, creative, humanistic, positive self-regard, always-ensuring people feel cared for not part of a system.
- Spontaneous analysis ...dynamic analyses that allows instant needs to be met.
- Rather than one rigid mindset we are able to be adaptable to one of many shapes; just like the headspaces shapes that represent our branding
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In summary headspace Geraldton has had an enormous impact on the mental health wellbeing for young people and their families in Geraldton in the last three years. As the only standalone service option for clinical mental health, staff work to capacity and have constant requests for community engagement. It has changed the health pathways for young people in the Geraldton catchment beyond recognition (GP, AOD, groups, Bush Adventure therapy, 1:1 counselling and vocational support). The positive impact that headspace has had in our community cannot be over stated and without it the marginalised populations we service would suffer further disadvantage.

This year alone headspace Geraldton has serviced 665 young people to date in 2019 and provided 2,380 occasions of service. We have engaged and supported 153 ATSI young people with 409 occasions of service and 73 LGTBTQI+ young regional people.

A key part of the success is the co-design/co-production of services with our young people and their family and friends. We are constantly asking for guidance review and can adapt service to reasonable ideas. The importance of this concept ensures that headspace is part of and responsive to our local community and thus helps remove potential barriers to help seeking. The wraparound service we provide ensures that once contact is made it is easy for young people to seek and access help that can change their lives. **Fiona Stewart Centre Manager headspace Geraldton**

Staff comments:

I write this from the lens of a medical practitioner who has worked in headspace for the last 2 years.

I have spent 7 years working in tertiary hospitals in metro and rural areas across Australia and another 7 years in primary care. This will also be my 5th year as lead clinical coordinator and lecturer for the UWA, Notre Dame and now Curtin rural medical school for the Midwest. Headspace is a unique service, which i did not consciously sign up for, initially i was relieving a colleague whilst she took leave. I stayed on, because it fills a need in Geraldton, which is not replicated nor replaceable. What I find refreshing about working in Geraldton headspace is the autonomy to see young clients at a suitable pace. By virtue of being an adolescent, they are often reluctant to be open, or find it difficult to relay information with clarity, maturity or confidence. I often see new clients for 45 minutes. Subsequent appointments can also be unpredictably long - my subsequent are often 30 minutes duration. By nature of being adolescents, combined with mental health, metabolic and situational issues, they also forget to turn up, a much higher "no show" rate than mainstream GP or standalone private psychology clientele. In today's GP centres, the CEO is commonly a non-medical businessperson, or a very business minded doctor. Objectively speaking, it means that whilst adolescents who have financial access and health system literacy still present to mainstream GP, it would be exceedingly challenging to be sensitive and thorough. You are reprimanded if your 10-minute appointments frequently blew out to 45 minutes. You might then suggest a GP keeps to 10 minutes, and offer the young person a longer follow up appointment in a week or so. Unfortunately, adolescents often present in crisis, and need a team approach, with immediate care and case management, impossible to achieve in ten minutes. Furthermore, adolescents might then miss your follow up appointment, and not be permitted to return to the practice until they settle a penalty fee, as is common practice now.

Some adolescents also do not feel comfortable attending the same practice as their parents, grandparent's etc. due to fears of confidentiality or for cultural reasons.

headspace Geraldton has a welcoming, youth friendly location and waiting area. The staff engage the youth in conversation and are very astute at gauging individual needs. This again is unique to headspace and cannot be understated. Other agencies frequently move address and are unknown to young people, especially those who have recently moved to Geraldton. Here, headspace as a nation-wide franchise is valuable, for continuity of care, and a brand that young people recognise as a place to seek non-judgemental, multi-faceted help. I have had clients present to me at headspace and said it was their very first contact with any health care. A lot of referral for adolescents is word of mouth and in their social media circles. I have found it especially valuable to be able to collaborate in real time with my specialist colleagues who are metres away from me, always with an open door and positive attitude. Different people here specialise in dealing with schools or Centrelink, housing, psychotherapy, outdoor therapy, family therapy, and other organisations that can assist us. This is unique to headspace because whilst other practices have co-located services, they rarely interact on a dynamic and daily basis. Furthermore, our telehealth psychiatrists are exceptional and encourage me to call or email them anytime. I trust you will find my sharing useful, please contact me via phone or email if you would like to further this conversation.

I feel that headspace Geraldton is an exciting, unique and irreplaceable asset that needs to continue to grow and diversify in order to continue to serve best the needs of our young people and future adults. **Dr. Martin Lee GP headspace Geraldton.**

Being a workplace fossil and having spent the majority of my working life in the community services arena across the public service, (Federal & State) and NFP sector I wholeheartedly endorse the headspace model. Flexibility built into the model allows for a service that is relevant to the community and the region albeit with limited resources particularly those sites that do not have the luxury of private practitioners to support the shortfall.

This relatively new centre (3.5 yrs) and team here have contributed to young people and their family's lives in many positive ways, which have supported their relationships, participation and engagement in their own lives and the broader community. Through strong passionate committed leadership, we have built some amazing partnerships, delivered numerous diverse groups and embedded nature into our clinical practice through bush adventure therapy. Without hesitation, I have the privilege of working alongside responsive, kind, passionate, energetic, diverse, resourceful, flexible, creative people that go the extra miles and genuinely care.

Briefly, headspace Geraldton provides a variety of clinical and non-clinical options to young people and their families within a regionally remote town (420km) from Perth with high unemployment, low educational outcomes, high proportionate aboriginal representation and the known associated low socio economic issues.

Considering headspace is delivering preventative community education, promotion of early help seeking and providing clinical support to mild to moderate end of the clinical spectrum to 12 -25 year olds, the horse needing more attention prior to our cart is of course parenting and early childhood – working with families to ensure better and quicker outcomes for young people.

Another area requiring attention is the gap from moderate to acute and the obvious answer would be to expand all headspace centres and their funding to incorporate early psychosis services or

alternatively the state system to lower their bar on severe and persistent. [Suzanne Carter Care coordination and Vocational support.](#)

As a metaphor, it feels like we are part of the immune system of the community organism ensuring the possibility of a young person thriving successfully in life. [Reto Blanke mental health nurse.](#)

The organism is the community.

headspace is the lymphatic system, specifically lymphocytes (type of white blood cell), which play a major part in immunity for the organism. Lymphocytes include t-cells, b-cells, and natural killer cells. We mediate adaptive immune responses, and trigger specific immune responses based on the particular pathogen. In order to do our job we need strong supplies of collagen, which can come from using vitamin c.

Collagen and vitamin c are funding, and resources. [Seth Tullar Youth Counsellor](#)

Being on this journey with headspace Geraldton since the centre opened in 2016 has been both inspiring and rewarding. Young people, with enormous courage, seeking help, can walk in to our headspace centre and be respected and heard. Families and Carers, seeking support for their young people are also key to the model and are respected and heard.

Each step of our client pathway reinforces our primary focus: providing a best practice clinical service at every stage of a Young Person's contact with our centre providing the appropriate supports for each individual. Our team cares about the Young People in our region and it is evident in everything we do and our continuously positive feedback from the community.

We are flexible and responsive to the needs of our community, ensuring at all times we are a client centred service and with the support of the Federal Government we will continue to do so, supporting the Young People of Geraldton and the Midwest Region in the years to come.

[Mel Haque – administration.](#)

Hello, my name is [Darby I am the Community Engagement Worker](#) for headspace Geraldton. A major focus of the role is to increase mental health literacy in the community, ensure young people and their families are aware of the services available through headspace and most importantly break down some of the barriers that prevent young people from accessing vital support.

I have been working with young people for close to ten years in diverse communities around Australia, ranging from remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia, Alice Springs to Lismore, Canberra and Geraldton. In all of these locations when working for other agencies/organisations I have always referred to the headspace local centre or website as I have always trusted that I would find information that is relevant and applicable for young people and importantly the local community. I am fortunate now to work with headspace Geraldton and I am blown away by the amazing work that is being done for the young people and community from our centre.

The benefit to a community of having an organisation that has such a strong foundation of evidence based clinical governance and oversight, with a major focus on being guidance by young people and ensuring we are active in the community is extremely significant.

To be able to take a nationally recognised model and with the guidance of local youth reference groups and local consortium members and apply that model in a way that best suits the current needs and demands of the community is incredibly formidable.

*Prior to moving to Geraldton, I wanted to work in a headspace centre as it seemed like a great organisation that helped young people. As fate would have it, headspace Geraldton began the year I moved to Geraldton. It has been a privilege to be on this journey as a new service. headspace Geraldton goes above and beyond my expectations of what working at a headspace centre would be like. The innovation and creativity of our management team continues to allow us to meet young people where they are at and provide engaging, meaningful, support in environments that are welcoming and youth friendly. We also have the flexibility and insight to be responsive to community needs and create services for young people and families that no other organisation would think/bother to provide – for example, grief education/support sessions following traumatic events, despite no young people involved being registered headspace clients. The accessibility of our service for young people and their families is paramount to being able to meet the needs of the community, and encourages those that are less likely to seek support to do so. Every day our flexibility and responsiveness is evident in the way the team responds to whoever and whatever walks through the door, often going above and beyond our funding criteria. We have a hardworking team and positive, collaborative team culture which focusses on supporting each other and striving to do the best we can every day to support young people of Geraldton. From the day we opened our doors we have not once been short of clients, and are constantly finding new ways to manage the demand for service. This alone demonstrates how beneficial headspace Geraldton is for Geraldton and surrounding communities. **Amber Jackson – Intake worker and Youth Counsellor***