

Submission to Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health

22 January 2020

United Synergies would like to make the following comments in response to the draft Inquiry into the Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health.

United Synergies has been operating headspace centres for over seven years, successfully establishing five centres across three PHN regions including:

- headspace Maroochydore in 2012-2013;
- headspace Toowoomba in 2013-2014;
- headspace Caboolture in 2015-2016;
- headspace Bundaberg in 2016-2017, and most recently
- headspace Gympie, opening late 2018.

In 2018 – 2019 alone, across its five headspace centres, almost 3,700 young people were assisted including over 14,000 clinical appointments. Of these approximately 10% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.

With the benefit of this comprehensive experience, United Synergies' believes key strengths of the headspace program includes its youth focus, youth engagement in centre design and operation, the development of community and service partnerships, and garnering community confidence. Accordingly, we believe, headspace centres are established with the young people themselves at the epicentre of a headspace service and all local decisions.

Supporting these underlying strengths of the headspace model are:

Youth Participation: As a youth-based organisation, youth involvement as an essential component to service design and provision. Local Youth Engagement Committees (YEC) are instrumental in this. Monthly meetings provide input towards service design, delivery, event planning and design of engagement strategies. As an example of such engagement, attached in **Appendix A**, is feedback from a YEC workshop discussing, 'what is important for your headspace', 'what would keep you connected to headspace', and 'what do the young people of [headspace centre name] need?'

Family and Friend's Participation: The provision of parent support groups supported by appropriate promotional materials and publications and school-based connections.



MENTAL HEALTH



CHILD AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



HOMELESSNESS



SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE

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Local community events: Participation in local community events providing an opportunity to engage with young people, their families, and friends.

Removal of Barriers: headspace centres actively seek opportunities to build awareness of services with minority and high-risk groups.

When commencing or considering proposed new headspace centres we have experienced strong engagement and desire from stakeholders to be part of the service delivery and engaged as consortium partners. This stakeholder engagement positions the headspace centres with a strong understanding of the needs of the region and the key requirements for the local headspace centre.

Accordingly, we would like to provide our organisations feedback to the Productivity Commission Inquiry that headspace remains as a holistic primary care platform that deeply engages with local communities allowing its services to be responsive and flexible to local needs. Further, consortiums ensure local co-ordination, effectiveness, and minimise the duplication of services. Finally, that the young people themselves are genuinely engaged on an ongoing basis to ensure fit-for-purpose services and patronage.

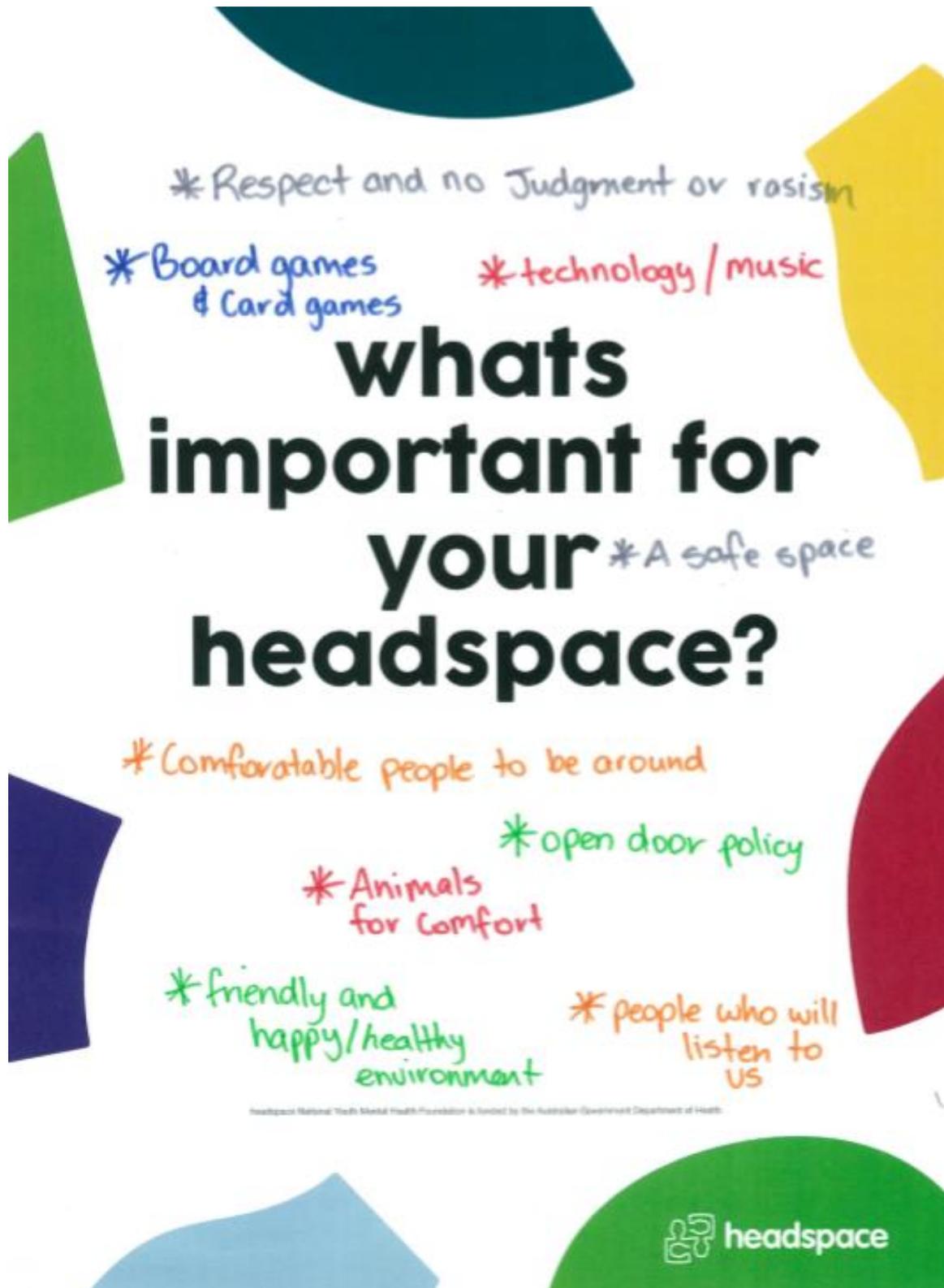
United Synergies would be pleased to discuss any details provided in this submission as required.

Yours respectfully,

Andrew Anderson
CEO, United Synergies

About United Synergies

United Synergies is a not-for-profit organisation, established in 1989 to help address youth homelessness in Noosa. The organisation has grown substantially since then and now work across Southern Queensland supporting more than 6000 young people each year in the areas of Child Safety, Homelessness, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. As a youth focused organisation, the majority (89%) of our services support young people under 25 years of age. With more than 30 years of experience, United Synergies has developed a reputation for effectively developing and managing value for money government contracts with consistent delivery across our KPI / outcomes. With services across more than 30 service agreements, our financial and clinical governance is well established and trusted in the health and human services sectors.



* Different Zones
for Activities

what would keep you connected to headspace?

* support
with life
skills

* An App
or easy connection

* Chill out
space

* Support around
personal issues

* fun day to
gather information

* No Judgement

* A good/fun
environment

 headspace

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health

* Bereavement
sessions/activities/counselling

* Groups that help
with addictions

what do the young people of *Headspace centre name*

need? * Anti-Bullying

~~Area~~ Area to chill out

No judgement

* Trust
activities

Different areas for groups

Support around personal issues

friendly environment

Designated smoking/outside zone

* help with
anxiety & Depression

 headspace

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health