

# Responding to the needs of service providers and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic

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## CWGPCP Connecting Services and the Community Case Study

May 2020



CENTRAL WEST  
GIPPSLAND  
Primary Care Partnership

# Background

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Central West Gippsland Primary Care Partnership (CWGPCP) has a strong history of connecting health and human services with each other, and the community. This allowed the CWGPCP to readily mobilise our members and the community to respond to challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# COVID-19 Response

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Building on existing relationships and trust, we put a call out to our partners to identify the current service gaps, community issues, pressure points and needs. As a result we enacted the following actions in partnership with our members and networks.

Our members have reported feeling connected and better able to support their clients to access the services they need to manage their health and wellbeing during COVID-19.

All COVID-19 response resources developed by the CWGPCP are available from

[www.centralwestgippslandpcp.com/covid-19-coronavirus-resources](http://www.centralwestgippslandpcp.com/covid-19-coronavirus-resources).

# 1 Keeping our community and members informed about which services are currently open and how people can access them

To ensure service providers and community members know what services are still available during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CWGPCP publishes fortnightly reports outlining what services are currently open and how people can access them.

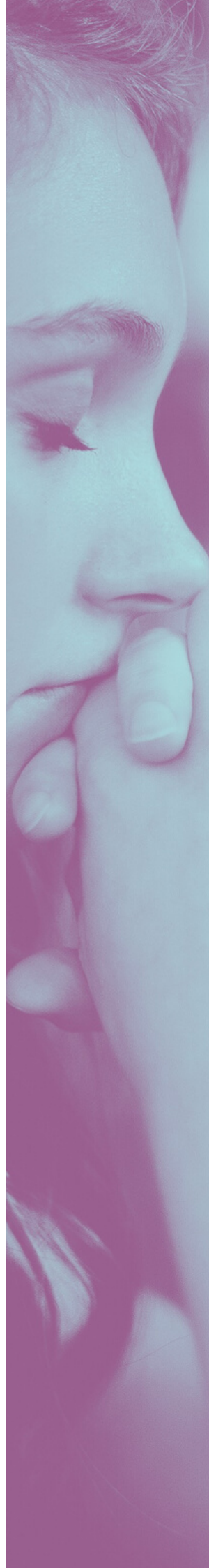
- [Latrobe services open during COVID-19 report](#)
- [Baw Baw services open during COVID-19 report](#)

# 2 Providing up-to-date information and key resources to our members and the community

To ensure service providers and community members are able to access relevant information, we created a dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#) on the CWGPCP website. The webpage contains a range of COVID-19 information and resources, including fact sheets developed by CWGPCP on topics such as [ergonomics while working from home](#). New resources are also included in the [CWGPCP weekly newsletter](#) and the quarterly [Health Literacy newsletter](#). The website also includes a dedicated section for [media releases](#) developed by CWGPCP relating to COVID-19.

# 3 Keeping services connected during the COVID-19 pandemic

CWGPCP is hosting [fortnightly online sector updates](#). Each meeting features a guest speaker talking about their service and any changes as a result of COVID-19. This is followed by round-table updates from all members joining the meeting. Members can stay informed and connected about different service changes across the catchment area. Examples of topics covered at these meetings have included gambling support services, disability services, child and family services and legal support services.



## 4 Increasing awareness of support available to promote good mental health and coping strategies

To raise awareness of the mental health supports that are available to the community CWGPCP have provided organisations with fact sheets from Gippsland Mental Health Alliance and promoted the Lifeline Catch program. CWGPCP have also developed a series of mental health promotion fact sheets:

- [Looking after your mental health during COVID-19](#)
- [Looking after the mental health of others during COVID-19](#)
- [Your Child's Mental Health During COVID-19](#)
- [Being resilient during COVID-19](#)
- [Coping with isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

A [media release](#) was sent to the local newspapers promoting the information in the mental health fact sheets.

## 5 Addressing service gaps and issues faced by youth during COVID-19

CWGPCP is facilitating conversations between local youth agencies such as Headspace and Youth Support and Advocacy Service as well as partnering with the Latrobe Youth Network to address service gaps youth are experiencing. An [information sheet](#) was developed for service providers on how to access internet and phone credit for young people so they can continue to connect with their support workers. A network of organisations/community facilities has been established to provide private meeting rooms for youth to use to have private conversations with their health professionals virtually. CWGPCP is also investigating the feasibility of establishing an equipment recycling project to have old laptops and mobile phones re-distributed to youth who don't have access to equipment they need to stay connected.

## 6 Increasing physical activity for vulnerable people and people with complex needs or conditions

CWGPCP developed a [media release](#) and [fact sheet](#) on physical activity during COVID-19 and is linking community health physical activity programs with recreation facility spaces to allow physical activity support programs to proceed with appropriate physical distancing.

## 7 Supporting networks and linkages to health and human service organisations

Latrobe City Council has established a COVID-19 hotline to support community members with navigating the service system. CWGPCP was able to support Latrobe City in their initial set-up of the hotline by providing advice and guidance on services available to community, common referral pathways, and linkages to key contacts within the services. Hotline staff also received training about what services are provided by different organisations.

CWGPCP has also worked to link people in the community displaced due to COVID-19, such as seasonal workers, with multicultural support agencies and government assistance.

## 8 Increasing awareness of family violence response services

In order to support our members to increase awareness of family violence services, CWGPCP developed a [media release](#) for the local newspapers promoting the Orange Door as the key point of contact for anyone experiencing family violence. CWGPCP also distributed 4000 STOP family violence cards to GP's, early learning centres, hospitals, pharmacies, food outlets, police stations, Centrelink and food relief agencies. Orange Door resources were also promoted to our members via the [CWGPCP website](#) and weekly newsletter, encouraging agencies to promote this information on to the community via their media channels.

## 9 Increasing awareness of gender equity and respectful relationships

CWGPCP developed a [media release](#) for local newspapers as well as a [fact sheet](#) promoting messaging around gender equity and respectful relationships. CWGPCP also supported the Latrobe Prevention of Men's Violence Against Women Network and the Baw Baw Our Watch Our Issue Network to work collaboratively across their vast membership base to share content and develop social media messaging promoting gender equity to the community.



## 10 Increasing awareness of gambling related harm and financial supports

CWGPCP promoted a series of fact sheets about financial support available during COVID-19, where to go for financial assistance and bill support, and information on the increasing trend toward online gambling and how to get support through Gambler's Help. This information was promoted to our members via the CWGPCP website and weekly newsletter, encouraging agencies to promote this information to the community via their media channels.

## 11 Increasing awareness of alcohol and/or other drugs coping mechanisms and available supports

CWGPCP has promoted fact sheets on alcohol and/or other drug supports available to our members via the CWGPCP website and weekly newsletter, encouraging agencies to promote this information to the community via their media channels.

## 12 Increasing awareness of respite services available to the community

In response to perceived gaps in the initial COVID-19 survey CWGPCP conducted, CWGPCP followed up with a number of survey respondents to provide individualised advice to agencies experiencing issues in accessing respite during COVID-19, linking them in with appropriate support agencies.

## 13 Food Security

CWGPCP has facilitated an extensive, coordinated food security response across Latrobe and Baw Baw. Full details of the COVID-19 food security response activities can be found in the [CWGPCP Food Security response during COVID-10 Case Study](#).

# Conclusion

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These early outcomes demonstrate a positive response to the actions implemented, from both our members and the wider community. The rapid mobilisation and response to service providers' needs during the COVID-19 pandemic would not have been possible without being able to leverage on the foundation that has been built by the CWGPCP over the past 20 years of partnership with our members and the community. The CWGPCP remains committed to strengthening the partnerships between the health and human services sectors now and into the future.

We will continue to remain responsive to our members' needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and will be developing new resources weekly to support our communities to remain connected.

To learn more about how the CWGPCP is responding to COVID-19 in our local areas please visit [www.centralwestgippslandpcp.com](http://www.centralwestgippslandpcp.com)

