

## **YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH POSITION STATEMENT**

### **Purpose**

This position statement outlines Council's commitment to strive for good youth mental health, which will enhance the quality of life for all young people in the Macedon Ranges.

### **Overview**

Macedon Ranges Shire Council maintains a strong focus on youth mental health and we serve a community that shares this passion. This is evidenced through our programs, including Live4Life, and our support of community groups such as the Macedon Ranges Suicide Prevention Action Group (MRSPAG).

Promoting health and wellbeing, including mental health is the first priority identified in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Plan. Over the last decade we have delivered mental health awareness education to over 17% of the population, young and old. While this education has built both the confidence and capacity of our young people and the community around mental health, mental health was still identified as the issue of greatest personal impact for young people in "Elevate," the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Youth Strategy 2018-28.

National and state data show that:

- The biggest issue facing young people today is mental health. Young people identifying mental health as an issue of national importance has doubled in the past three years from 21% to 43%.<sup>i</sup>
- Young people in rural and remote areas are likely, as result of unique structural, economic and social factors, to have poorer mental health outcomes and a heightened risk of suicide compared to their metropolitan peers.<sup>ii iii</sup>
- Mental disorders are most prevalent in young people aged 16-24. <sup>iv</sup>

- 75% of people with a mental health issue experience their first episode in adolescence.<sup>v</sup>
- Living with a disability can affect adolescent mental health, which may be further damaged if the person living with a disability is also bullied. <sup>vi</sup>
- Mental health for LGBTI people is among the poorest in the country, with same sex attracted young people being up to six times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts. <sup>vii viii</sup>
- More Indigenous young people die by suicide than non-Indigenous young people, and this number is increasing. <sup>ix</sup>
- Suicide accounts for a third of all deaths of young people aged 14-25 and is the biggest killer of young Australians.<sup>x xi</sup>

## **Position Statement**

Macedon Ranges Shire Council commits to working with our partners and community to improve the mental health, and ultimately the quality of life, for young people in our shire. Council understands that the number of young people experiencing psychological distress is a concern to our community and recognises that we have a leadership role in developing proactive and collaborative approaches to improving youth mental health outcomes.

Young people dealing with a mental health issue do best when living in a community that understands and supports good mental health and wellbeing. Council will continue to strengthen community understanding and capacity to support young people in distress.

Council will advocate for, and work with our partners to facilitate, the following best-practice approaches to ensure better mental health outcomes for young people in the Macedon Ranges:

- “hurdle free” access to mental health services
- professional mental health support available 24/7 to young people
- Young people possessing the mental health and wellbeing tools and skills to help themselves and others.
- rurally based and tailored mental health services and solutions
- broader community mental health education
- young people engaged in designing and delivering mental health education
- effective e-health and digital mental health and wellbeing support
- relevant and meaningful support for families and carers
- appreciation and responsiveness to diversity among young people

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<sup>i</sup> Carlisle, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Perrens, B. and Plummer, J. 2018, *Youth Survey Report 2018*, Mission Australia.

<sup>ii</sup> W. Bartik, M. Maple, H. Edwards and M. Kiernan, 'Adolescent survivors after suicide: Australian young people's bereavement narratives', *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention* 34, no. 3 (2013): 211.

<sup>iii</sup> Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, *Suicide & Suicide Prevention in Rural Areas of Australia: A Briefing Paper for Rural Suicide Prevention Forum*, Orange, NSW: University of Newcastle, 2017. [https://www.crrmh.com.au/content/uploads/Briefing-Paper\\_FINAL\\_11052017.pdf](https://www.crrmh.com.au/content/uploads/Briefing-Paper_FINAL_11052017.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Slade, T., Johnston, A., Teesson, M., Whiteford, H., Burgess, P., Pirkis, J., Saw, S. (2009) *The Mental Health of Australians 2. Report on the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*. Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra

<sup>v</sup> Kessler, RD et al. (2005). *Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication*. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62: p. 593-602.

<sup>vi</sup> Tania King et al. *To what extent is the association between disability and mental health in adolescents mediated by bullying? A causal mediation analysis*; *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 47, Issue 5, October 2018, Pages 1402–1413, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyy154>

<sup>vii</sup> Leonard et al. (2012); Corboz et al. (2008); Suicide Prevention Australia (2009)

<sup>viii</sup> Dyeson et al. (2003); Rosenstreich, G. (2013) *LGBTI People Mental Health and Suicide. Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. National LGBTI Health Alliance. Sydney.

<sup>ix</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2015). *Causes of Death, Australia, 2014. Catalogue No. 3303.0*. Canberra: ABS. Accessed 2 March 2015 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3303.0?OpenDocument>

<sup>x</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2015). *Causes of Death, Australia, 2014. Catalogue No. 3303.0*. Canberra: ABS. Accessed 2 March 2015 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3303.0?OpenDocument>

<sup>xi</sup> . Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2015). *Causes of Death, Australia, 2014. Catalogue No. 3303.0*. Canberra: ABS. Accessed 2 March 2015 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3303.0?OpenDocument>