

Burnie community celebrates launch of new headspace satellite

Wednesday 10 March 2021

Community members passionate about providing high-quality mental health support to young Tasmanians will come together today to celebrate the opening of Burnie's new headspace satellite service.

headspace Burnie staff and youth volunteers will join with community organisations, healthcare providers, and members of local government to recognise the milestone at a launch event at the Mount Street site.

It comes after the satellite, which offers young people living in the Burnie region greater access to mental health, alcohol and other drug, and education and vocational support, opened its doors in late January.

headspace Burnie manager Deirdre Brown said since then, the satellite service had already received a steady flow of referrals to support young people in the area.

"We're really heartened with the response we've had already from young people living in and around Burnie, from their positive feedback about the service's welcoming vibe, to the clinical support we've been able to offer them so far," Ms Brown said.

"We hope today's launch helps get the word out even further so that young north west coasters can get the help they need, in a way that's tailored to suit them."

The opening of the satellite service (operated by Cornerstone Youth Services) means young people aged 12-25 years from the Burnie region no longer have to travel to Devonport to access in-person headspace services.

It's a vital increase in accessibility, says Youth Reference Group member Ashley Murphy, who grew up in Burnie, works in Devonport, and now calls the north west coast town of Penguin home.

For Ashley, the opening of the new headspace Burnie satellite was a welcome strengthening of mental health support for young Tasmanians living outside of the major urban centres.

"From a community perspective, I think we've seen a dramatic change over recent years where people now talk more about mental health, and having services like headspace, that are so well-known, supports those conversations," the 24-year-old said.

"In a small town, people can unfortunately get used to services popping up, and then disappearing, but having a prominent service in the Burnie community that is so recognisable for what it does for young people – it signifies to those young people that the community cares."

In particular, Ashley says headspace's 'no wrong door' approach – whereby a young person who visits a headspace service will be seen, triaged and, if the service itself isn't the right fit for them, referred onto a suitable one – is critical.

"When you're a young person, and you're struggling, you don't have the energy to keep going to a new doctor, then a new service," she says.

"It can be very exhausting to have doors closed, and it can be a really long journey to keep doing that, especially if you're in a rural community."

The opening of headspace Burnie follows the upgrade of the headspace Devonport satellite to a full centre last November, as part of an Australian Government-funded push to improve access to headspace services for young Tasmanians living in the north west.

headspace services are funded by the Australian Government through Primary Health Networks (PHNs) program. The Tasmanian PHN is Primary Health Tasmania.

It's hoped the presence of an additional bricks-and-mortar youth mental health service in Burnie will help bring down rates of psychological distress among young north westers – which Primary Health Tasmania research suggests is among the highest in the state.

In the longer term, Primary Health Tasmania chief executive Phil Edmondson said early intervention services such as headspace Burnie could help address the region's prevalence of mental ill-health in adulthood.

“Our data suggests that adults living in the Burnie area experience high or very high psychological distress at a higher rate than the Tasmanian average,” Mr Edmondson said.

“That's why it's so vital to support early intervention through services such as headspace Burnie, so we can support young people to and teach them ways to cope to avoid potential distress manifesting later in life.”

headspace CEO Jason Trethowan says the opening of headspace Burnie will allow more young people to access critical mental health services to get through challenging periods and back on track.

“The period of adolescence and early adulthood is a critical time in a young person's life, with 75 per cent of mental health disorders emerging before the age of 25,” he says.

“We also know that young people are resilient and with the right support and tools, available at services like headspace Burnie, they can respond to life's challenges in a healthy and positive way.

“We're extremely proud to celebrate the opening of headspace Burnie and to offer young people access to services closer to home.”

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For media interviews, please contact:

- Deirdre Brown at **headspace Burnie** on 0491 200 980 – all operational queries relating to headspace service delivery in the north west and north
- Jenny Denholm at **Primary Health Tasmania** on 0418 773 233 – general queries about the expansion process and commissioning of headspace services in Tasmania; Jenny can also put you in touch with Ashley Murphy
- **headspace National** media team on 0413 025 385 or send an email to media@headspace.org.au – queries about the national headspace program

About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. Each year, headspace helps thousands of young people access vital support through our headspace services in 129 communities across Australia^[1], our online and phone counselling services, our vocational services, and our presence in schools. headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health) alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support. For locations of headspace services, as well as factsheets and resources for young people and their families and friends, please visit the headspace website: headspace.org.au

^[1] As at February 2021 and inclusive of licensed headspace centres, satellites and outposts