Autumn 2026 | Issue 4

headspace Bendigo

NEWSLETTER



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The Push Up Challenge is back! Are you in?

We're getting ready to rep for the 2026 Push-Up Challenge and we challenge you to join us!

That's right, our biggest fundraiser of the year is just around the corner. Running from June 3-26, our team 'headspace Bendigo Stronger Together' is aiming to complete 3,307 push-ups to honour the 3,307 lives lost to suicide in Australia in 2024.

It's free, it's fun and here are some fast facts:

- It's raising funds for those in our community who sometimes find the weight of their mental health too much.
- headspace Bendigo is proud to be one of three official beneficiaries of the challenge. In recent years we've put any funds raised towards our Fitness and Nutrition Coaching program.
- You can replace push-ups with alternatives to suit your fitness!

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Lindsay Rose
headspace Bendigo
Senior Leader

Rising up to meet community need

Hello friends of headspace Bendigo.

The change of seasons is well and truly upon us and on my chilly morning walks I've been thinking about what it means to live and work on the beautiful lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, and what it's like to live in Australia while supporting our young First Nations people. National Reconciliation Week is coming up (May 27-June 3) and I can't say we have all the answers, but I do know that as a centre we always try to put our best foot forward to engage in the reconciliation process and walk alongside our young First Nations people.

Looking back over the past few months, there have been some special highlights for me, including:

- Attending the annual Suicide Prevention Awareness Network (SPAN) event in March with a special acknowledgment to the first Youth Ute Show.
- Meeting with current and prospective community partners and discussing shared care opportunities for young people and families in our community.
- Taking part in planning for the future headspace Plus model of care (our centre is one of 30 lucky centres nationwide to be nominated to pilot increased services over the next four years).
- Attending the Agnico Eagle Community Partnership Forum.
- Having staff attend the Bendigo Pride Festival.
- Last but not least, spending time with family & colleagues celebrating the Easter carnival in our beautiful city.

All of our programs continue to work at full capacity, and I honestly couldn't be prouder of the headspace Bendigo teams and the way they all go about their daily tasks in response to the needs of our community. Until next time.

With thanks,
Lindsay

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Take care of yourself while waiting for your appointment:

- Eat well. Sleep well. Stay active. Reduce alcohol and other drug use.
- Sign up for an eheadspace account (eheadspace.org.au) where you can talk to a youth mental health professional 7 days a week from 9am to 1am.
- Talk to trusted adults, family and friends.

If you are in an emergency or need immediate help:

- Call 000

If you need to speak to someone urgently, call:

- Regional Triage 1300 363 788
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

Acknowledgment of Country

headspace would like to acknowledge First Nations people as this continent's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and are committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive.

Matt's making an impact

For four-and-a-half years Matt has been helping young people set and reach realistic goals when it comes to their fitness and nutrition.

Here at headspace Bendigo we are proud to contribute any Push Up Challenge funds we receive towards continuing this incredibly popular service. Below, he tells us more about why he loves what he does.

What impact has the personal training sessions had over your four years at headspace Bendigo?
I've noticed young people being guided to make choices in terms of moving their body and fuelling themselves based on their individual lifestyle and preferences. If they've come in with a goal that's very appearance based, they've been able to reframe it in terms of what can their body do. For example, the original goal might be 'I want to look skinny', their new goal ends up being something like 'I want to be able to walk the dog three times a week.'

What is one thing you wish young people / the community knew about the relationship between physical health and mental health and wellbeing?
I don't believe there's a mind-body connection as this can refer to there being a separation; that's like saying the waves and ocean aren't connected. The mind and body are one, just like waves are the ocean. It's important we are nourishing our body and minds, so our ocean feels clear.



"I feel so lucky to be in this position at headspace and seeing the eyes of young people light up when they are smashing their goals and doing it in a self-respecting and healthy way."

Read more with Matt at our website.

Click here to join the headspace Bendigo Stronger Together team or donate today.

Fitness, fun & fundraising: The Push Up Challenge is on again

From page 1

This year marks the 10th year the Push-Up Challenge has run in Australia and in that time more than $60 million has been raised for mental health charities, plus more than 1 billion push-ups have been smashed out.

To join our team: Visit The Push-Up Challenge - headspace Bendigo Stronger Together and click the orange button "Join us" then follow the registration process.

To make headspace Bendigo your centre beneficiary: Visit The Push-Up Challenge - headspace Bendigo Stronger Together, register as you wish (part of the Stronger Together team, as an individual or create your own Team or Community). Follow the registration process and when asked to select a beneficiary select the headspace logo then use the drop down box to navigate to Victoria and then select headspace Bendigo.

We're excited to make this year the best one yet, so Challenge Accepted?

Time changes everything

How our local youth are benefiting from 50-minute GP consults

Long GP consultations are a necessity, not a luxury, especially for young people. That's the message from headspace Bendigo clinicians.

With the average GP appointment time in Australia sitting at 19 minutes (RACGP) and with generally only one issue permitted per consult, the extended care being offered by headspace Bendigo's GP Clinic is having an impact on the long-term health and wellbeing of local youth.

Thanks to a funding boost last October from the Agnico Eagle Australia Community Partnership Program, initial consults of 50 minutes are the norm for headspace Bendigo's GP clinic, providing the time and space for both the GP and young person to explore more than one aspect of their health in one appointment.





Above: Dr Colin Sherlock and Centre Manager Lindsay Rose.
Right: Dr Chris Sasse.

headspace Bendigo GP Dr Chris Sasse says the longer appointment times make a difference. "GPs are great at multi-tasking and can provide physical, sexual and reproductive health care all at the same time, all in the same place, with no cost to the young person," she says.

"The feedback I've had from being able to give more time to a young person to communicate their concerns has included that they appreciate not feeling rushed. They prefer a wholistic approach and feel heard, better understood and respected."

One young person, who wishes to remain anonymous, says their experience was so positive they'll reach out again if they need to. "I felt seen and heard. I felt comfortable too, and having those basic needs met first makes it more likely that I will book in for medical help again."

Click here to read the full story at our website

Centre Manager Lindsay Rose says the specialty bulk-billing clinic has become an essential service offered by headspace Bendigo, with more than 130 young people seen by clinicians since October last year and the average appointment time pushing the 40-minute mark. He says the benefits of longer consultations far outweigh any perceived negatives, including financial ones.

"Local youth deserve the time to explain their health concerns in a place they feel welcome, safe and comfortable," he says. "We provide that right now and, funding permitted, we will continue to do that."

Meet our current GP Registrar Justin Ha

We feel so privileged that we get to support and train the next generation of youth-friendly GPs. **Click this link to read our Q&A with Justin and find out how he came to be at headspace Bendigo**.







Max’s hard work pays off

Big and little wins celebrated during Work & Study month

The ripple effect from working with the headspace Bendigo Work and Study team can stretch further than you think, just ask Max.

Reaching out in 2024 for help with anxiety and moving forward in life, Max says the Work and Study Program put things into perspective for him.

“They helped identify the area I wanted to work in and worked quite hard to assist me in getting the right kind of job for me,” he says.

Taking up a position as a Disability Support Worker with Golden City Support Services (above left), Max is happy to be working in a job where he feels he can make a difference.

“Work has been great,” he says. “All my coworkers have been helpful; the work environment is friendly and the satisfaction from supporting individuals makes work enjoyable. None of this would be possible without all the support I’ve been given.”

In fact, Max is so appreciative that he decided to “give back to a place that has given me so much”, joining the headspace Bendigo Youth Ambassador Group.

Max is just one of many that the headspace Bendigo Work and Study Program has helped over the years. The team - Vocational Specialists Dean Cosgriff and Lara Eames, and Vocational Peer Worker Alex Caines (above right) - are proud of Max’s hard work.

“We’re told Max has started his career positively, showing initiative and professionalism and we’re so happy for him,” Dean says. “Shoutout to Golden City Support Services too for providing Max with this chance.”

Bridging the gap between doubt & ability

Opportunities and connections are central to the work the headspace Bendigo Work and Study team do.

The services provided by the team include exploring career and study options, writing a resume and cover letter, looking and applying for a job, preparing for a job interview, enrolling in study, as well as tailored face-to-face and online support.

“It can be challenging for young people to obtain employment in today’s tough labour market and we try to educate young people about what they can be doing to stand out from other applicants,” Dean says.

“And we’re all about celebrating the big and the little wins too.

“There’s stories like Max’, but then it might also be that a young person builds up the confidence to go and hand in a resume. Those are the results you can’t measure in stats, but we can see it and celebrate it with the young person when it happens.”

Gifting their time

Meet some of the wonderful volunteers who make up our Youth Ambassador and Family & Friends Reference groups



Meet Amy, she tells us why she volunteers for our Youth Ambassador group.

“I joined the Youth Ambassador group as a pathway into mental health support work. During placement for my Certificate IV in Mental Health, I was fortunate that my mentor organised a tour of the services provided by headspace Bendigo. During that visit, Haylee (headspace Bendigo’s Youth Community Engagement Worker) briefly spoke about the Youth Ambassador program. Afterwards, I explored the headspace website to look for potential job opportunities once I completed my placement but instead found myself drawn to learning more about the Youth Ambassador role. I quickly fell in love with the idea of making a meaningful difference by supporting young people in accessing the help they need and here I am!”



Meet Vin, he tells us why he volunteers for our Family and Friends Reference group.

“I joined the Family and Friends Reference goup at headspace Bendigo because I know what it feels like to struggle in silence, and I would love to help minimise that struggle with those who feel that way. My lived experience, alongside my studies in community services, drives me to be passionate to speak up — for myself, and for those who can’t yet find their voice. As a volunteer at headspace Bendigo, I’ve had the chance to turn my experiences into something meaningful — whether it’s sharing insight, contributing to conversations, or helping shape services, it feels like being part of something that truly matters. My goal is simple — to help build a community where people feel seen, heard and safe enough to be vulnerable without fear of judgment. Through volunteering over the past 20 years, I’ve learned that sometimes the most powerful thing you can offer someone is your presence — listening deeply, speaking honestly, and showing up with empathy.”

If you would like to join our YA group, or you know someone who would like more information, email **hayleekennedy@bchs.com.au** to schedule a meeting.



Curiosity builds for YAs at the Discovery Centre

Our awesome Youth Ambassador group recently held their fortnightly meeting at Bendigo's Discovery Centre and supported the team with their Lego exhibition CURIOSITY. They loved the opportunity to check out the amazing space and see how the community has come together to build an incredible mosaic out of Lego. Our group volunteered to help with sorting out the Lego pieces to ensure there was enough Lego to create another beautiful mosaic piece to display. Thank you to Matt and Alissa for inviting our team to assist with your project.

Youth Ambassadors have their say on the headspace plus model



Alyssa, Kate and Linda (pictured right) recently represented headspace Bendigo's YA group at the headspace plus model consultation workshop. Huge kudos to them for being a voice for the young people in our community.

Linda reflects on the experience below:
"It was fascinating to see the behind the scenes conduct and the thorough processes to implement a new headspace service model. Being part of this transition felt really significant. There is a real sense of pride in knowing that us Youth Ambassadors were directly shaping the youth voice to ensure headspace facilities better tailor to young people. It's empowering to see our input being used to create a more accessible and supportive environment, and I hope that we can continue to do so."

Connecting with pride & purpose



It's been a busy couple of months in the HEY Diversity Program, here's a little of what we have been up to.

Events we have attended:

On March 31 we marked Trans Day of Visibility (TDoV), a day to celebrate trans pride, increase visibility, and highlight the resilience and accomplishments of the community.
We attended the Flag Raising ceremony over in the Bendigo Library Gardens and provided information and resources for the community.

On Wednesday April 1, we attended Bendigo TAFE's Pride Week celebrations. It was wonderful connecting with students and staff, sharing our resources and information. This is always a great day at Bendigo TAFE.

We also attended Pride in the Park on Saturday April 18 alongside our colleagues from Bendigo Community Health Services. This was a huge event for the Bendigo Pride Festival. We connected with many community members, enjoyed the entertainment and celebrated pride.

We have also been delivering LGBTIQASB+ General Awareness training in partnership with Thorne Harbour Country at BDAC as part of their Rainbow Tick Accreditation process.



It's been great sharing our knowledge, skills, experience and having important discussions on all things LGBTIQASB+.

Our diversity groups are back after a break over the school holidays and have now moved to fortnightly. These are held in a safe inclusive space where young people can come along make friends and meet others on a similar journey.

If you are interested in joining one of our diversity groups, contact headspace Bendigo on 5406 1400, you can find more information under the Diversity Information tab on our headspace Bendigo web page.



School can’t: What it is and how you can help

If you’re a parent / caregiver and you’re struggling to get your young person to go to school this is for you.

First of all, what is school can’t? And how is it different to school refusal?
Glad you asked! High levels of distress and a reluctance to go to school is known as school can't. Often, despite their best efforts, family and friends are unable to get a young person to go to school. With school refusal, it is often the case that family and friends know a young person isn’t attending school as a choice.

A number of factors can contribute toward school can’t behaviours, including individual, family, school and the community. Everything from parents separating, to transitioning from primary to secondary to bullying.

The good news is with some strategies and the right support; things can get better for your young person.

What you can do:
Early action can stop behaviours from turning into long-term habits. Modelling effective communication and problem-solving can encourage your young person to do the same.

- Ask your young person about their concerns and worries. Sometimes it can help to be direct... try these questions.
- Create a plan together that explores ways to manage the start of the school day / term / year.
- Speak to the school and develop a collaborative plan.
- Learn relaxation techniques together to help reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.
- Consider if your young person may benefit from professional support to assist with strategies to cope with school can’t.

Signs to look out for

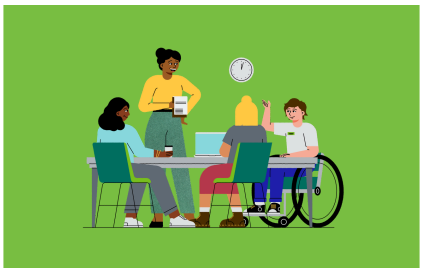
- Distress and anxiety about going to school.
- Tearfulness before school.
- Frequent complaints of physical illness before or during school (think headaches, tiredness, stomach aches etc)
- Poor teacher / student relationships
- Can’t be bothered to get out of bed / leave the house / get out of the car to go to school
- Finding it difficult to return to school after disruptions to routine like holidays, school sporting events or school camps.
- Frequent absences from class

For details on how YOU as the parent/caregiver can support yourself through school can’t, click here.

our programs

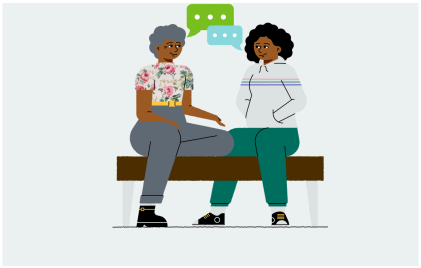
programs and activities we offer at headspace Bendigo

headspace Bendigo



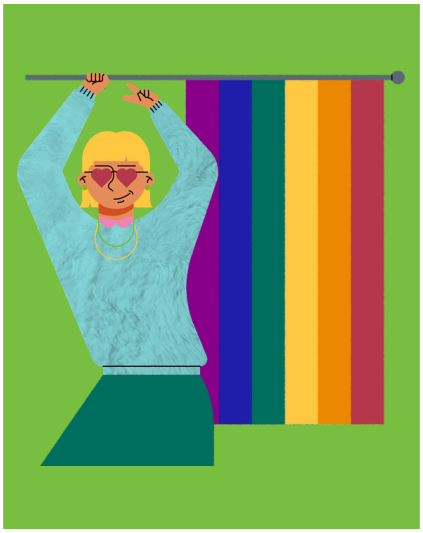
Youth Ambassadors

Our Youth Ambassadors meet fortnightly on Monday (5:00pm-6:00pm) to ensure the services we provide and the programs we run are youth friendly, inviting and engaging. They advocate for youth mental health and wellbeing.



Family & Friends Reference Group

Our Family and Friends ReferenceGroup gives caregivers of young people the space to be heard and contribute to improving our services and programs. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday (5:00pm-6:00pm).



LGBTIQA+ support

Weekly diversity groups for young people and allies.

POND - 12-14 yrs (Tuesday) 3:30pm-5:00pm
TADPOLES - 15-17 yrs (Monday) 3:30pm-5:00pm
FROGS - 18-25 yrs (Wednesday) 3:30pm-5:00pm

Trans and Gender Diverse Parent & Carer Support Group
Monthly (Monday) 7:00pm-8:30pm



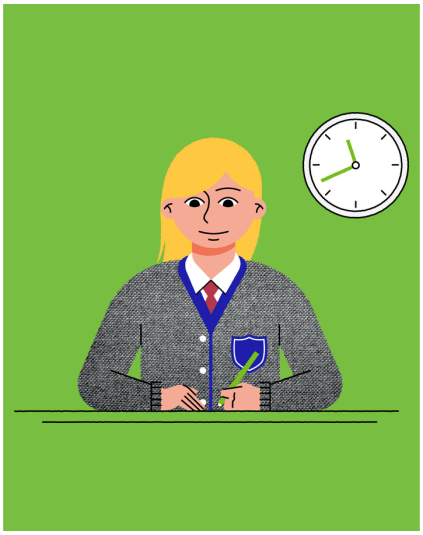
General Practitioner (GP)

Access our doctors in centre for support with your mental, physical and sexual health concerns, alcohol and other drug support and referrals to specialists. Appointments are bulk-billed, so your Medicare details are required.



Fitness & Nutrition Coaching

Wednesday (fortnightly) our Fitness and Nutrition Coach is available to answer all of your fitness and nutrition questions and develop plans to improve your physical and mental health.

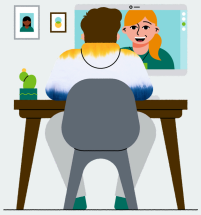


Work & Study Support

Looking for support to reach your work or study goals?

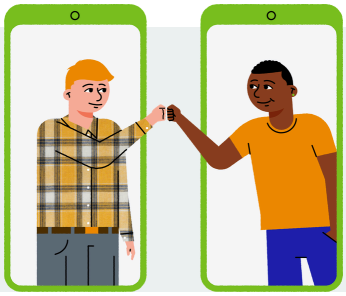
In Person: Our Vocational Specialists and Vocational Peer Worker are here to assist you to engage in further study and employment. It is an individualised program that listens to you, so you can achieve your goals!

Online: A Work and Study Specialist can provide tailored 1-on-1 support to you, accessible from anywhere in Australia via video calls, webchat or phone.



Telepsychiatry

Accessing a psychiatrist can be difficult and expensive. headspace Telepsychiatry provides an experienced workforce and reliable technology to bring psychiatric services to young people in rural and remote areas.



eheadspace

eheadspace is available from 3pm-10pm, 7 days a week, for a 1-on-1 chat with a trained clinician. It's a confidential, free and a safe space to talk about what's going on.

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

Upcoming events

We love sharing all that headspace has to offer and will be doing so at the events listed below.

Pathways & Support Expo
Kalianna School, Bendigo
Date: May 22, 2026

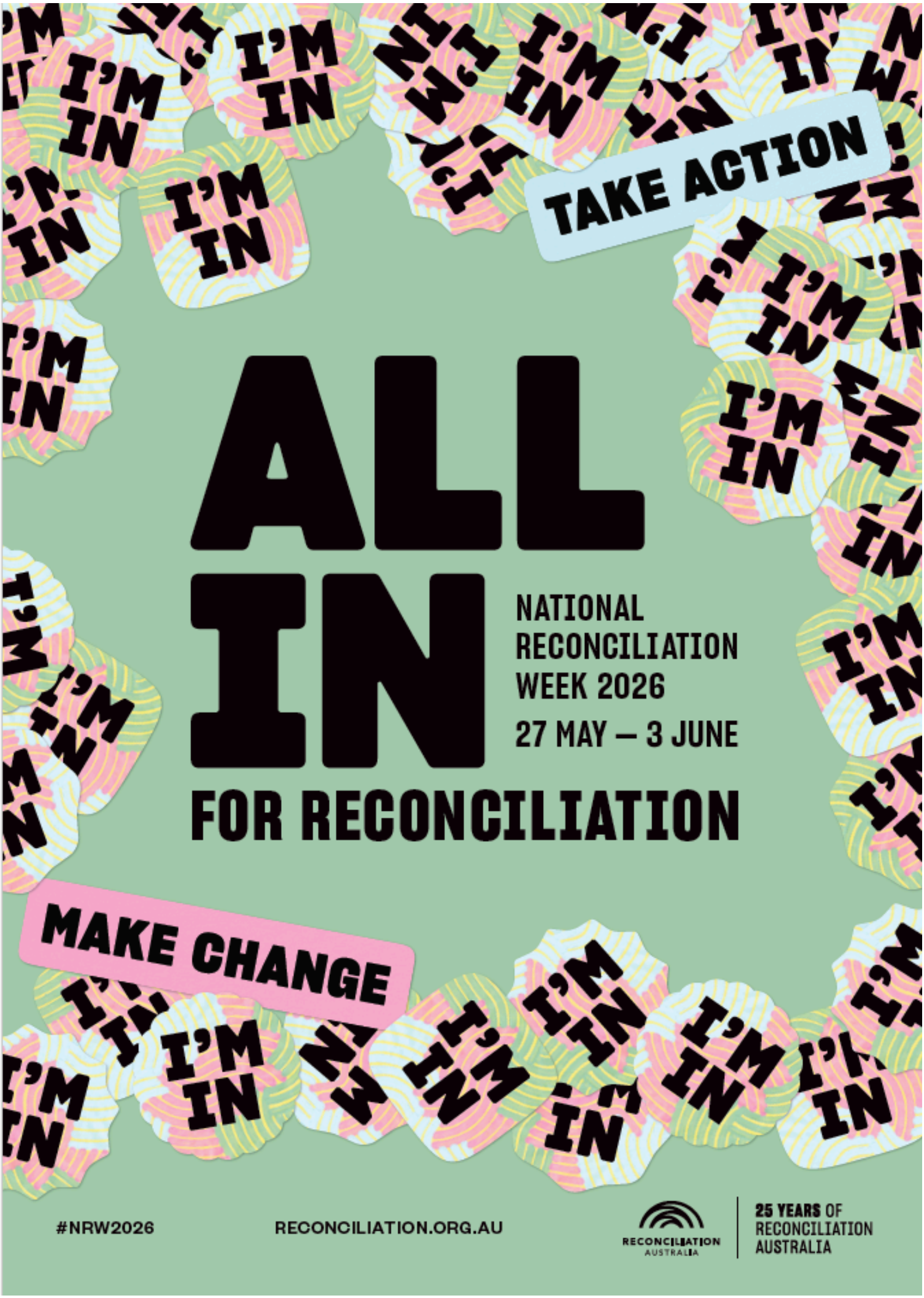
Community Services student information session - Centre tour
Bendigo Senior Secondary School
Date: May 25 & 28, 2026

Information session
Wedderburn College
Date: May 26, 2026
Time: 12.15-1.15pm.

headspace Bendigo is open:
Monday - Wednesday: 8.30am to 6pm
Thursday: 12.30-5pm
Friday: 9am - 5pm

Child safety statement

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation is a child safe organisation. We believe in partnering with young people, listening, and supporting them to manage their health and wellbeing. headspace is committed to creating an environment where everyone feels included and respected irrespective of their culture, language, gender, appearance, sexuality, lifestyle, values, beliefs and faith, abilities and socioeconomic circumstances. headspace has a zero tolerance of abuse, racism, discrimination and bullying. Visit headspace.org.au for more on our commitment to child safety and wellbeing.



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