

# NEWSLETTER



Dushy (left) wellbeing staff at CSC (above) are working to create a safe space for students to reach out for help via the EMHSS initiative.

## STUDENTS FIRST

### School outreach initiative striving for success

headspace Bendigo have gone back to school and students and staff at Castlemaine Secondary College are benefiting.

Funded by the Victorian Department of Education via the Enhancing Mental Health Support in Schools (EMHSS) initiative – headspace Bendigo clinician Dushy heads over to the school once a fortnight. Based in the wellbeing hub Dushy provides face-to-face counselling sessions and other support to young people.

“It’s good to be there in person,” she says. “Students feel more supported and like there’s less stigma as we’re somewhere neutral and familiar to them.”

In place for two terms now, Dushy has supported numerous students with such success that she now has capacity to see more. Collaboration and trust is key to this type of outreach program, she says, not just between headspace Bendigo and the student, but the school as well.

“The program has provided me the opportunity to connect with the wellbeing team, as well as students, to see and understand challenges from the school’s perspective and figure out what they may need,” Dushy says.

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**Lindsay Rose**  
headspace Bendigo  
Senior Leader

# Ready to build on a record year

Hello friends of headspace Bendigo,

I'd like to start this season's newsletter by acknowledging the fires that tore through the community of Harcourt and district to the south of Bendigo in January. With shared grief we read and heard of the devastating losses of housing, businesses and livestock and yet this grief was counterbalanced by a sense of pride as we watched the immediate and wider community come together to support one another.

**To the community of Harcourt, please know that headspace Bendigo stands ready to provide support over the coming months. Please see page 5 for resources available on our website.**

For our centre, 2025 was a record year of service delivery, culminating in partnering with the Rotary Club of Bendigo for Carols by Candlelight – while the weather left a bit to be desired, the event was enjoyed by our whole team.

Looking ahead, 2026 promises to be another busy year for headspace Bendigo. With a jam-packed calendar of community and school-based events you will see our staff far and wide promoting our service, all the while continuing to deliver service to young people and their families seeking mental health support.

We all look forward to continuing to serve our community and hopefully we can see many of you out and about as we continue our work.

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](https://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.



# Goal setting for success

As 2026 kicks off and everyone gets back into work, school and study, setting goals could just be the game-changer you need to make the most of your year.

But why set goals at all... and how do you set achievable goals?

Goals matter because they can give you purpose and help you stay motivated and focused during uncertain times or big life transitions - like going from primary to secondary school or secondary school to the big wide world. Breaking goals down into smaller actions gives you space to learn and adapt along your way.

It's worth noting that there's no right or wrong way to set goals, and not every goal needs to be a big dream or career milestone - small steps can equal huge achievements. What really matters is having goals that reflect what's important to you right now.

The **SMART** framework is a popular tool to set goals, especially if you're feeling unsure where to start. It stands for:

**S = Specific** (Think of the five W's: Who, What, When, Where and Why. With a big focus on the Why).

**M = Measurable** (How will you check to make sure you're progressing toward your goal?).

**A = Achievable** (Make your goal realistic and ensure you have access to or the resources to get it).

**R = Relevant** (Think about what is important to you and make sure your goal aligns with this).

**T = Time-bound** (Give yourself a date that you'd like to achieve your goal by to keep yourself motivated).

## RESOURCES

Head to the headspace website and check out the following resources on goal setting:

- [How to set goals and achieve them](#)
- [Self-guided activity: Setting goals can help you make positive changes in your life](#)
- [Managing family work and study expectations - hearing from multicultural young people](#)

## Wellbeing always the focus

*From page 1*

"It's been wonderful to build the relationships I have with both teachers and students. Trust, privacy and consent are important to the way this works, and so we don't share information with anyone – including the school - if we don't have consent from the student to do so."

Referrals for the program come to headspace Bendigo via the school's wellbeing team with an intake-focused support session booked in first. Then, more therapeutic sessions are provided if necessary.

Read the full story at [headspace.org.au/bendigo](https://www.headspace.org.au/bendigo)

# Tips for a top school year

Heading back to school can bring up big feelings of excitement, anticipation and nerves. So can starting a new school for the first time. Some young people can adjust to the changes and settle in quickly, others may find it daunting and need more support. Here's how you can support your student through transition times like this.



## How to prepare your young person

Parents and caregivers play an important role around the transition to going to school. You can help your young person by:

- Planning and being organised, not just for each term but for each day.
- Visiting the school and surrounding area in advance so it looks familiar.
- Doing a trial run of school drop off.
- Practising 'what if' scenarios.
- Creating morning and afternoon routines that include fun and relaxing activities.
- Staying connected and interested in your young person's learnings and daily happenings at school.

Being aware of common concerns among young people around going to school, in particular those going from primary school to secondary school, will also help you understand what your young person may be feeling.

Common concerns include:

- Fitting in
- Managing their time and tasks
- Peer pressure
- Differences in physical development
- Fear of being bullied
- Worry around travelling independently to school
- Navigating different systems, people, timetables etc
- Increased pressure with homework.

## Don't forget...

Supporting yourself as the parent or caregiver is important. This is also a time of change for you as your role will be different and continue to evolve. It's very normal for families to also experience a range of emotions like excitement, grief, worry, pride and hope (just to name a few).

Be proactive and look after yourself by:

- Building a relationship with the school.
- Contacting your child's teacher to discuss relevant 'handover' information.
- Checking with the school about supports and programs in place to enable a smooth transition.
- Practising self-care.
- Chatting with friends and family who've been through this before.

Work and Study Month is coming up in March 2026. We can't wait to chat to young people about study support, career pathways, preparing for employment and so much more. For more information email

[IPS@bchs.com.au](mailto:IPS@bchs.com.au)

## School support resources

- [Tips to support a young person going back to school](#)
- [Transition from primary school to secondary school - supporting your young person](#)
- [Understanding school can't](#)
- [Self-guided activity: Overcoming procrastination](#)
- [headspace Work and Study support](#)





# Hey, we're here for you

**Have you been affected by the bushfires? We can help.**

Coping with the uncertainty of bushfires can be tricky.

There's no right way to feel in response to the impact the Harcourt and Ravenswood fire has had on our community. Thoughts and feelings can change over time too.

If you, your family and/or friends have been impacted by the bushfires help is available if you need it. Our team (see above) at headspace Bendigo is open and here for you. Want to make an appointment? Fill in one of the following referral forms:

- [Self referral](#)
- [Family, friends and professional referral](#).

On our website are resources you may find helpful, including:

- [Coping with the stress of bushfires](#)
- [Supporting your young person during the fires](#)
- [Supporting a young person after a natural disaster](#).

## Things you can do after a natural disaster

- **Acknowledge it's a tough time** - it's okay to remind yourself the events were out of your control.
- **Be patient with yourself** - it can take time to make sense of what's happened.
- **It's okay to start small** - For a sense of normality it's important to keep routines or regular activities.
- **Be aware of triggers that remind you of what's just happened** - this could be media, sounds or smells.
- **Practice being calm** - Try deep breathing and reminding yourself that you are safe.

## 7 Tips to a healthy headspace

1. **Learn how to handle tough times to help your headspace**  
Find strategies to learn and develop resilience, self-awareness and confidence.
2. **Get into life** Do activities that bring you joy and provide you with a sense of purpose.
3. **Create connections** Put time and effort into meaningful connections with community, family and friends to boost your energy.
4. **Stay active** Whether through natural movement like walking or organised sport, staying active helps with sleep, energy, managing stress, mental agility and overall wellbeing.
5. **Get enough sleep** Keep to a routine and try and get a good amount of sleep to help your concentration and energy levels.
6. **Eat well** Fuel your body with nutritious meals for energy and a healthy headspace.
7. **Cut back on alcohol and other drugs**

# New year, new YAs

Our Youth Ambassadors are gearing up for a big year, and we've got some fresh faces to introduce you to.



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

"I became a Youth Ambassador to help represent young voices as well as other Karen people that are keen on joining the Youth Ambassadors and contribute to a community that puts wellbeing first. Through this program I've had opportunities to share ideas, support local projects, and connect with other Youth Ambassadors. Recently I've spent time helping care for the garden at headspace, refreshing our outdoor garden space while enjoying some sunshine. I can't wait to be part of all the exciting events coming this year and to be involved and be part of this incredible team!"

## We're proud to include this Karen translation of what Linda has written.

### တၢ်ဒုးသ့ၣ်ညါဘၣ်သုလၢ Linda

ယကဲထီၣ်သးစၢ်ခိၣ်န့ၣ် နံးသီးယကမ့ၢ် ပုၤခၢၣ်စးတဂၤလၢ ကမၤစၢၤပုၤသးစၢ်သ့ၣ်တဖၣ် ကဆိၣ်ဒီးအကလုာ်, အတၢ်ထံၣ် တကးဒံးဘၣ် ပုၤကညီသးစၢ်ဖိတဖၣ်လၢ အဆိၣ်ဒီးဘျးစဲလိာ်သးလၢ သးစၢ်ခိၣ်န့ၣ်တဖၣ် ဒီး အသးဆိၣ် တိစၢၤမၤစၢၤသကိးယုၣ်တၢ်လၢ ပုၤတတၢၤအပူၤ လၢအဟံၣ်ခိၣ်ဆိၣ်နီၣ်ခိၣ်နီၣ်သး တၢ်ဆိၣ်ဆူၣ်ဆိၣ်ချ န့ၣ်လီၤ.

လၢတၢ်ရဲၣ်ကျဲၤအပူၤန့ၣ်, ယဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ခွဲးတၢ်ယၢ်လၢ ယကဟ့ၣ်ခိၣ်ဟ့ၣ်နီၣ် တၢ်ထံၣ်သ့ၣ်တဖၣ်, တၢ်ဆိၣ်ထွဲမၤစၢၤဟီၣ်ကဝီၤတၢ်တီၢ်ကျဲၤတဖၣ်ဒီး ဒုးဘျးစဲလိာ်သးဒီး သးစၢ်ခိၣ်အကုၢ်အဂၤ သ့ၣ်တဖၣ်န့ၣ် လီၤ.

ဖဲတယံၣ်ဒံးဘၣ်န့ၣ်, ယဟ့ၣ်တၢ်ဆၢကတီၢ်လၢ တၢ်ကွၢ်ထွဲ headspace ဖိကရၢၢ်, မၤကဆဲးကဆိၣ်ဒီး မၤဂုၤထီၣ်ကုၤပတၢ်ဆိၣ်ဘျးဆိၣ်သၢကရၢၢ်အလီၢ်လၢတၢ်ချၢအခါ မုၢ်တၢ်ကဝီၤဟဲလီၤဖဲန့ၣ် ဘၣ်ယသးမုၢ်ဖဲ န့ၣ်လီၤ.

ယဆိၣ်ခိးကွၢ်လၢဒီးသ့ၣ်ခုသးခုလၢ ယကဟံၣ်ယုၣ်မၤသကိးတၢ်ဒီးပုၤစဲၣ်နီၣ်တဖုအံၤ လၢခါဆူညါတၢ်ဟူးတၢ် ဝဲၤ တၢ်ရဲၣ်တၢ်ကျဲၤ လၢကဟဲသ့ၣ်တဖၣ် လၢတနံၣ်ညါအံၤအတီၢ်ပူၤလီၤ .

If you would like to join our YA group, or you know someone who would like more information, email [hayleekennedy@bchs.com.au](mailto:hayleekennedy@bchs.com.au) to schedule a meeting.



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

"I work as a Health Promotion Officer for the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health and was keen to bring my passion and experience along with my interest in youth mental health to headspace and the local community. As an ambassador, I will be supporting the social media pages, so watch this space for holiday activity suggestions and health recommendations."



# Teamwork = dream work

“What sets this group apart is their culture of respect, inclusion and shared leadership.” That’s what Yo Bendigo wrote in their newsletter of our Youth Ambassadors when sharing that they had won the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Award for Teamwork and Collaboration late last year.

This wonderful achievement recognises their outstanding collaboration, teamwork and dedication to working together to effect lasting change for other young people and the wider community

We are so proud of everyone involved and all the hard work the team has put in. Together last year they took part in more than 50 events, contributed to the annual service review and provided feedback that led to meaningful changes in our centre, such as dimmer switches in our clinical rooms, inclusive waiting areas and sustainability initiatives. They also undertook youth mental health first aid training and continue to beautifully maintain the headspace garden, donating fresh produce to local youth through BCHS and Foodshare.

## Comfy inclusions make space inviting for all

Bean bags and more fidget toys would provide neurodivergent clients with a more calming space our YAs said. And we listened (see right). These were just two recommendations our YA group made in our annual service review.

They also identified other areas in our centre that could do with some meaningful change and now our clinical rooms have dimmer switches, our waiting areas are more inclusive, centre evacuation plans are more visible and our sustainability initiatives, like recycling and composting, are thriving. Thanks team!





Ricky Martin, Bradley, and Elsa at our FROGs group last year.

# Pup-tastic guests

by Maree Dixon

For the last FROGS Diversity Group of 2025, Bradley Broadway came to talk about his Inclusive Community Connection Program. We were fortunate to spend time and engage with two of his poodles: Ricky Martin and Elsa.

For more than 10 years Bradley has been working alongside schools and employment services to support young people to grow, connect and thrive. His work has focused on young people with disabilities, autistic and neurodivergent people, and those who identify as LGBTIQ+ and their parents/carers. You may even recognise Bradley from the TV show "Pooch Perfect".

Thanks, Bradley, for coming in with your doggos, we all loved it, and look forward to you attending more groups.

## LGBTIQ+ trainings

Did you know we offer training on the following topics:

- LGBTIQ+ inclusiveness session - introduction for school students and young people (20 minutes)
- LGBTIQ+ Diversity stall for school or organisations
- LGBTIQ+ information session
- LGBTIQ+ introduction session for organisations.

We can also design training around your needs. For more info contact headspace Bendigo or [visit our website](#).



headspace is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. headspace welcomes all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.



## Have we met yet?

If we haven't, we would love the chance to introduce ourselves! Our education sessions can help you with:

- Introduction to headspace
- Tips for a healthy headspace
- Anxiety
- VCE/HSC tips
- Bullying.

Visit our website to [complete a request form](#).



## Jingle bells, jingle bells, we mingled all the way!

The rain stopped just in the (St) Nick of time in December so we could all gather for Carols by Candlelight in Rosalind Park, and what a night we had.

Thanks to the Rotary Club of Bendigo for organising such spectacular music, community spirit and Christmas joy. We are so grateful for the support shown by Rotary and the community to headspace Bendigo and we look forward to working together again during the year.

# Upcoming events

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

### **Welcome and Connect**

Weeroona College, Bendigo

**Date:** Feb 10, 2026

**Time:** 1.45-5.30pm.

### **Student Welcome Day**

Bendigo TAFE City Campus

**Date:** Feb 10 and 12, 2026

**Time:** 12-1.30pm.

### **Victorian Pathway Certificate presentation**

Bendigo Senior Secondary College

**Date:** March 3, 2026

**Time:** 9.30-10.30am.

### **SPAN Suicide Awareness Walk**

Dai Gum San precinct, Bendigo

**Date:** March 15, 2026

**Time:** 11am-1.30pm.

### **Information session**

Wedderburn College

**Date:** March 17, 2026

**Time:** 12.15-1.15pm.

### **Community Services student information session**

Bendigo Senior Secondary School

**Date:** April 27 & 30, 2026

**Time:** 10-11am.

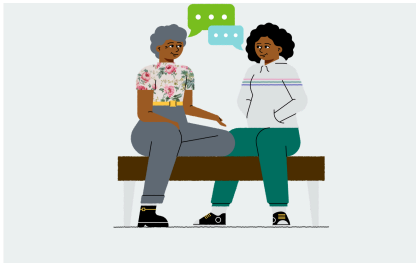
# our programs

programs and activities we offer  
at headspace Bendigo



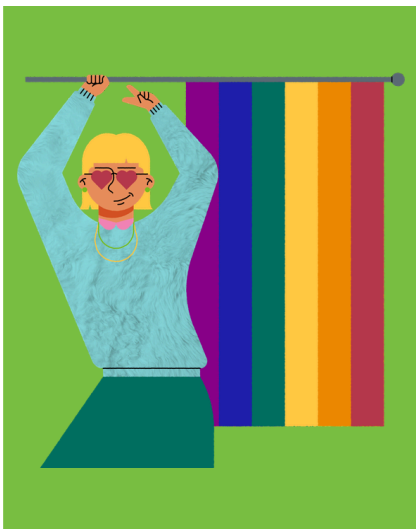
## Youth Ambassadors

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 Reference Group 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).



## LGBTIQ+ 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



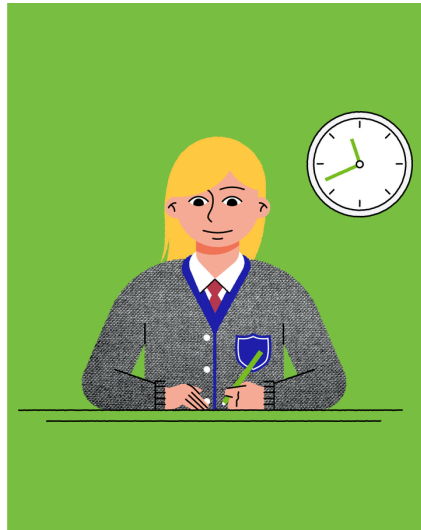
## General Practitioner (GP)

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

Every Wednesday 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.

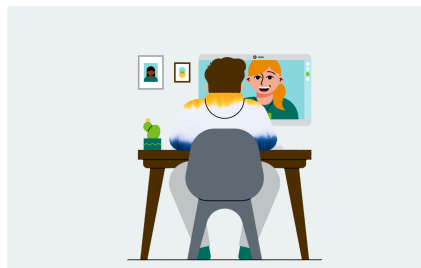


## Work & Study Support

Looking for support to reach your work or study goals?

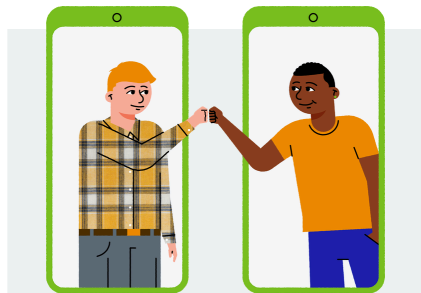
**In Person:** Our Vocational Specialists and Vocational Peer Worker are here to assist you to engage in further study and employment. It is an individualised program that listens to you, so you can achieve your goals!

**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

### 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](https://www.headspace.org.au) for more on our commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

### headspace Bendigo is open:

Monday - Wednesday: 8.30am to 6pm

Thursday: 12.30-5pm

Friday: 9am - 5pm



# 2026 Suicide Awareness Walk



Join us for our annual walk, where community walks together for **healing and hope**.

**15**  **10:30**  
**MARCH** **AM**

**Dai Gum San, Bridge St,  
Bendigo**

- Butterfly remembrance ceremony
- Guest speaker, Jed Zimmer
- Support services on-site
- SPAN merchandise for sale
- Free barbecue after the Walk

Please contact us if you have any questions at:

 [admin@spancv.org.au](mailto:admin@spancv.org.au)

 [www.spancv.org.au/events](http://www.spancv.org.au/events)

