

NEWSLETTER



Agnico Eagle, headspace and BCHS representatives

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CLINIC BOOST

Generous donation supports GP services

There was much to celebrate on headspace Day this year after we received a generous donation from the Agnico Eagle Australia Community Partnership Program towards our GP clinic, ensuring young people can continue to see a GP at our Pall Mall site.

headspace Bendigo Senior Leader Lindsay Rose said the funds were arriving at a pivotal time as we await increased funding from the Commonwealth Government.

"The clinic has become an essential part of what we do in Bendigo," he said. "Without this crucial support from Agnico Eagle, the service was at risk of falling over."

headspace Bendigo GP Colin Sherlock said the financial boost would have a positive and direct impact on the lives and healthcare of the young people they see.

Read the full story on page 3.



Lindsay Rose
headspace Bendigo
Senior Leader

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

Strengthening our community care

Hello friends of headspace Bendigo.

I'd like to start this season's letter by thanking you all for the feedback we have received following our inaugural newsletter. It has been great, and we look forward to sharing more of our work and our goals and dreams in supporting our community.

That being said, I can report it's been a busy three months of which you will read about in the following pages.

Special highlights have been:

- R U OK? Day, Wear It Purple Day and headspace Day – all days that allow us to partner with others and promote wellbeing initiatives in our community.
- Being successful in an Agnico Eagle Community Partnerships grant. Agnico Eagle has supported our centre for the past five years via different grants and promotional activities for which we will always be grateful, however I would also like to thank all our community partners who support us – special shout outs to State Trustees (workplace giving), Stonemans IGA Strath Village Community Chest, Golden Square Football Netball Club and Rotary Club of Bendigo for many generous donations provided to support our work.
- I am excited to say that we have started our first dedicated community outreach service to Castlemaine Secondary, with a clinician travelling down fortnightly to co-locate at the school. We are in the process of reviewing how this is going and hope to replicate the service in other communities surrounding Bendigo – so far, it's going great!

I would also like to acknowledge there have been some tough times in our community this past season; times that have directly affected our young people and families. Whilst it has been tough, it has been reassuring to see our community rally and support each other.

As another busy year draws to a close, I would just like to say thanks once more and take care.

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.



Investing in thoughtful care

From page 1

“This funding allows me and our other GPs to provide thorough and thoughtful care by having longer appointments that are free,” Dr Colin (above right) said. “I find that being able to spend time with young people to really understand and talk through their health and concerns allows us to provide a more holistic care that otherwise may not be possible, and all without a financial barrier to the young person.

“This helps us work on long term health and wellbeing goals and establish healthy habits and strategies that can be used for life.”

Director of Environment and Sustainability Australia at Agnico Eagle Felicia Binks said the company was committed to youth wellbeing and that it was hoped the funding would help preserve one of the region’s few free youth medical services while also supporting the workforce.

“We are a proud partner with headspace Bendigo. Their leadership within the Bendigo community has provided invaluable support, programs and opportunities to young people,” she said. “Our goal is to build local capacity and make sustained impact in the partner organisations and the lives of the people they support, leaving a positive legacy for the community.”

Bendigo Community Health Services (lead agency for headspace Bendigo) CEO Mandy Hutchinson said the generous donation would make a big difference to the health of young people in Bendigo.

“Our headspace GPs provide youth-focused, early intervention care for people aged 12 to 25,” Mandy said. “The service is so important, particularly for young LGBTQIA+ clients. They know they can come to headspace and receive no-cost, non-judgemental, specialised care as part of a holistic, one-stop-shop.

“We are so grateful for Agnico Eagle’s amazing contribution. Demand for health services in general outweighs funding models, so we are actively seeking philanthropic partnerships such as this across our whole service.”

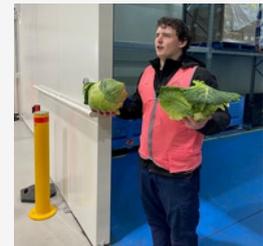
It was wonderful to welcome Tim and Felicia from Agnico Eagle to headspace Bendigo for headspace Day (above left) and to be able to thank them in person.

See page 4 for pictures from our headspace Day celebrations.



headspace
Day 2025





Breaking bread with Foodshare

headspace Bendigo Youth Ambassadors tour local facility.

Back in August our Youth Ambassadors (YA) were given the opportunity to take a tour through Bendigo Foodshare.

They learned more about how Bendigo Foodshare supports our community and organisations to provide food supplies to those in need of a helping hand.

Special thanks go out to Meg and Bridget for encouraging our YAs to see how they can become involved to support the wonderful work the staff and volunteers do at Foodshare.

YA Evie had this to say at the end of the tour: "Thank you so much for organising that tour. It was so interesting to learn about the processes and see the warehouse. I believe having a donation tin at headspace would be great, and even a basket or box that I or other Youth Ambassadors could make up for books that we could donate to their book drive. It was really informative and I would love to explore further about cooking!"

Our YAs are getting right behind Bendigo Foodshare and are currently growing spinach in our garden to go towards the [Grow a Row or Pick a Branch](#).

The project that encourages people from across Central Victoria to plant extra crops in their gardens, or harvest their excess fruit and vegetables with the intention of donating it to Bendigo Foodshare to redistribute as food. We're so proud of the work our YAs are doing!

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

Youth Ambassador profile: Meet Angus



Why did you join the Youth Ambassador (YA) group?

To help other neurodivergent people in Bendigo.

Why should others become a YA?

It's a chance to give back to other people or help out your community.

What are some opportunities you have had as a YA?

I've been able to meet with other like-minded people to discuss issues of great importance.

What goals do you have to help the community?

I want to help neurodivergent people have the same opportunities and level of access to good support networks that I've had.

What are some valuable skills you have learnt from being a YA?

Putting myself out of my comfort zone.

Gifting their time

We appreciate the amazing contribution our volunteers at headspace Bendigo do to support our work.



Meet Kathy, she tells us why she volunteers for our Family and Friends Reference group.

“Being part of the headspace Family and Friends Reference Group gives the opportunity to share with the community some personal experiences regarding supporting a young family member with their mental health. Plus, your insights can directly shape the way services are delivered, including creating more welcoming and supportive environments for families navigating tough times. There’s also the chance to both learn and teach — members are offered training to deepen their understanding, while also supporting other families by sharing your stories. I really value having the opportunity to have input into both local and national campaigns regarding families and mental health for young people.”



Meet Milly, she tells us why she volunteers for our Family and Friends Reference group.

“I joined the Family and Friends Reference group because I am deeply passionate about supporting young people and their mental health. Being a part of this group allows me to contribute to a supportive, inclusive community where we focus on the importance of young people feeling heard, understood and empowered. I believe every young person deserves access to the right support at the right time, and I’m committed to being a voice that helps shape that support in a way that truly meets their needs.”

headspace Bendigo values input from family and friends, both in the clinical care of young people and by participating and engaging in activities to improve our services.

So, what do you do as a Family and Friends Reference Group member?:

- Attend monthly group meetings, and Consortia meetings.
- Participate in local and national projects.
- Marketing, promotion and community awareness.
- Policy advocacy.
- Education and training.

If you're interested in joining our Family and Friends Reference Group email headspace@bchs.com.au for an application form.



Joe's powerful headspace visit

We were excited to welcome Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Joe Ball in August.

Joe represents the lived experience voice in government and was in Bendigo for a roundtable hosted by Zoe Belle Gender Collective Inc, Women's Health Loddon Mallee and the Centre for Non Violence which we and our lead agency, Bendigo Community Health Services, both attended. It was an inspiring and powerful conversation about commitment and diversity.

Joe also met with parents and young people at headspace and listened as they openly shared their stories, worries, ideas and hopes for a better future for LGBTIQ+ people and their families. We are so proud of everyone involved for being vulnerable. Joe's warmth, empathy and generosity has left an indelible mark.



headspace Bendigo's LGBTIQ+ HEY Diversity Worker Maree Dixon (above with Joe) said the meeting was important and that people left feeling seen.

"It was wonderful to spend time with the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, discussing the issues and challenges parents, carers and young people face living regionally," she said. "To have some of our parents, carers and young people attend was important to raise awareness on issues in the community. Joe's ability to listen, acknowledge and make change is an inspiration to us all."

Dates of note:

November 13-19 is Trans Awareness Week.

November 20 is Trans Day of Remembrance.

Do you have an enquiry about the HEY Diversity Program? Or would you like to book an education / information session? [Follow this link](#) and fill in the form.



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.



Finding order with your food

This column first appeared in the BCHS Community Newsletter and explores the fraught relationship between behaviour and food, and how you can support your young person.

In any given year, around 4% of Australians are living with an eating disorder, and almost one-third of these are young people aged 10-19. Eating disorders are often undetected, can take years to be formally diagnosed, and as high as 3 in 4 people who meet criteria for an eating disorder do not seek professional help.

A vast proportion of the population is also engaging in disordered eating behaviours and practices that don't meet the threshold for an eating disorder. Disordered eating is a larger and more complex issue, with many behaviours minimised or even normalised (think skipping meals, avoiding foods, and fasting for long periods with the intention of weight loss or maintenance).

Young people and disordered eating in Australia

- [ABS data](#) shows that in 2023, 18-19 year olds are eating 774kj less than they were in 2011-2012.
- Only 50% of young people surveyed ate breakfast every day.
- Over 1 in 3 adolescents are engaging in disordered eating behaviours in any given year.

Major factors for young people and eating disorders

Dieting is one of the strongest precursors for developing an eating disorder. Obsession and restriction around food are all concerning behaviours and can worryingly be masked as “clean eating and lifestyle choices.” Body image is another major driver for young people to engage in dieting or disordered eating, with 80 per cent of young women reporting they fear “getting fat”.

Other risk factors for eating disorders can include:

- Physical health conditions that require dietary modification (such as coeliac disease and diabetes).
- Mental health conditions like depression, anxiety (in particular social anxiety and OCD).
- Neurodiversity (such as ADHD and ASD).

Lead the way for young people

Set the example to promote healthy eating behaviours and body image by:

- **Focusing on food function:** So, when discussing food intake talk to how different foods provide different nutrients and how it can fuel the body (for example, improving focus, energy levels and stamina). Avoid linking food choices with weight gain or loss.
- **Being neutral about body image:** While being positive about your young person's appearance is not a bad thing it places importance on how they look. This can make natural body changes and transitions more difficult when they happen. Similarly to above, focus on performance, function and strength when discussing people's bodies.
- **Practising what you preach:** If you are skipping meals, not prioritising your intake and talking negatively about your body it creates a confusing narrative and normalises these behaviours to anyone listening.
- **Promoting regular, intuitive and mindful eating:** Eating a meal or snack every 3-4 hours you're awake is recommended, so try limiting distractions and sitting down together to eat.

If you need it, support is available via eheadspace seven days a week from 3pm–10pm (AEDT) or call 1800 650 890.



Matt's back at headspace!

We love that we can announce our personal training program is back at headspace Bendigo.

Funded as a pilot program for three years by Agnico Eagle Australia Community Partnership Program, it - and Matt - has proved so popular that we just had to keep it going by using our yearly Push Up Challenge Fundraiser to keep his services. Our personal training program is an integral part of the mental health and wellbeing supports we offer to young people.

Feedback so far has included:

- "You've helped me a lot."
- "I feel a lot stronger."
- "I feel a lot more confident going into the gym."
- "I can physically see the changes happening now. It feels good."
- "I've been going walking more now."

Matt offers support around fitness, nutrition and overall wellbeing. His individual fitness sessions can include strength training, cardio workouts, boxing and more, giving young people the chance to move their bodies in ways that feel fun, supportive and confidence-building.

What makes Matt's approach unique is his holistic style. He knows that true wellness isn't just about exercise but about finding balance. He helps young people explore gentle changes that can make a big difference in their everyday lives, and he brings his counselling background to weave together both mind and body approaches. This means the support he offers isn't just physical but also about mental health, resilience, and creating positive long-term habits.

Strength in numbers



With 74 legends in our corner helping promote headspace Bendigo in our Push Up Challenge, we are proud to say we raised over \$11,000!

Our 'Stronger Together' team this year included: Lindsay, Haylee, Dale, Lahni, Dean, Sarah, Lara and Alex. We pushed 136,948 times for better mental health and we can't thank the team and other kind donors enough.

Special thanks go to:

- Dean for being a good sport and dressing up each year to get the conversations started about mental health.
- Naveen, Mandy and staff from BCHS for all the support
- Jason, who has been supporting our centre for the last four years. We know the challenge is very close to your heart and we appreciate all that you do.



Workshop books out

Work and Study team present innovative session on supporting neurodiversity in the workplace

In September we presented our Understanding and Supporting Neurodiversity in the Workplace session.

“I loved the presentation so much and got so much out of it. Everyone spoke so well and was really engaging.”

Working collaboratively with Be.Bendigo, the two-hour workshop was a first for Bendigo and provided insight into general information on neurodiversity and neurotypes. Neurodiversity recognises the natural variations in how people think, process and experience the world — including conditions such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.

headspace Youth Vocational Specialist Lara Eames said the motivation behind the session was to highlight what neurodiversity is, and the practical tools that every business can implement to support and encourage their neurodiverse staff.

“There is a real need and want from businesses to understand how to provide support to their neurodiverse employees,” Lara said. “The fact our session was booked out in two weeks backs that up.”

It was held at Mackenzie Quarters and facilitated by our Vocational Peer Worker Alex and Megan King from Occupational Therapy Consulting, with support from headspace Bendigo Youth Ambassadors.

“Along with an overview on neurodiversity, and the strengths and skills neurodiverse employees bring to the workplace, it explored adjustments and accommodations workplaces can implement to support neurodiverse employees,” Lara said.

For more of what the team has been up to visit our [Facebook Page](#)

If you're interested in our Work and Study Program contact IPS@bchs.com.au

Strength, legacy & the next gen

headspace Bendigo staff were out and about for NAIDOC Week celebrations. See where we were below.



BDAC NAIDOC Week Family Day

Our Community Engagement Officer Haylee said this is the day she pencils in the diary first each year. This is her favourite - and who wouldn't line up for some koala love? She, Maree, Dushy and Youth Ambassadors Asher and Alyssa loved connecting and engaging with young people and their families as they got creative and spent time making badges and reflecting on what the words strength, vision and legacy meant to them.



Indigenous round

On Sunday July 6 the North Bendigo Junior Football Club invited us to their annual Indigenous round. The U15 girls and U14 boys wore guernseys designed by a local indigenous artist and took part in the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony performed by Jason Kerr Sr. While the North Juniors braved the weather to take on White Hills & Mount Pleasant. We chatted with a number of parents and young people, and had many younger siblings join us to colour some of our Take a Step indigenous artwork while the games were taking place.

NAIDOC Week community lunch - St John of God hospital

Our team was invited to this special event and they all agree the highlight was meeting young Hudson (right) and congratulating him on his amazing artwork that he created for his very proud mum. It was part of a vibrant collection of artwork on display by First Nations artists. We also heard from Troy Firebrace who played the didgeridoo and delivered the Welcome to Country.



Out and about



National Tradie Day

In August we headed to Bendigo TAFE's Charlston Road campus for their National Tradie Day event. We created activities for students to participate in while learning about headspace services, and Jeremy Forbes from HALT Australia gave a rousing talk about the importance of reaching out for support and checking in on mates. A big thank you to everyone at Bendigo TAFE for holding such an important event to highlight the importance of seeking support for your mental health and wellbeing while celebrating the wonderful work tradies do.



Boys to the Bush

In September we headed along to the Boys to the Bush Community Engagement Day. The experience focused on engagement in learning stations, sports participation, mental health and fostering friendships outside a classroom setting. It was wonderful to meet the grade 6 staff and students from primary schools around our region. Huge shout out to Narelle for the opportunity to be part of such an amazing event.



Boort Show

In October we were invited back to the Boort Show and what a wonderful, rural event it was. Among other things, we loved chatting to anyone stopping by the tent, seeing the trucks roll in for the Truck Show and watching the excitement from everyone who entered the many competitions available to show off their skills.



in the community



Karen information session

It was an absolute pleasure to host a wonderful group of Karen young people at headspace Bendigo recently. Thank you to Christina and Ku Htee from the BCHS Settlement Services team for introducing the young people to headspace services and for supporting our staff and volunteers to learn more about the Karen culture. We look forward to having you all back in the future.



R U OK? Day

We were in the Macedon Ranges for R U OK? Day this year to spend time with year 8 students and staff from Sacred Heart College, Braemar College and Gisborne Secondary College. We kicked off the day with useful tips on how to start meaningful conversations and provided an overview of our services, then the students got to enjoy a sausage sizzle, petting zoo, lawn activities, photo comp and our Chill Zone!



Wear It Purple

On August 29 we celebrated our LGBTIQ+ young people for Wear It Purple Day. A day to promote safe, inclusive and accepting environments, this year's theme was 'Bold Voices, Bright Futures.' We caught up with some of the team from Anglicare at Little Shish, and big shout out to Little Shish for the purple coffee cups and being so inclusive.



our programs

programs and activities we offer
at headspace Bendigo



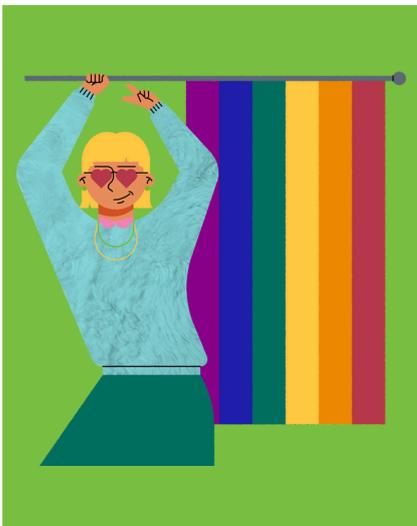
Youth Ambassadors

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



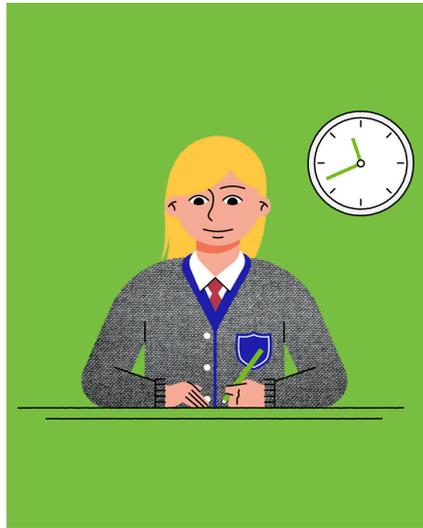
General Practitioner (GP)

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.

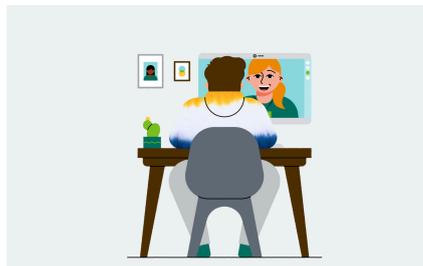


Work & Study Support

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.



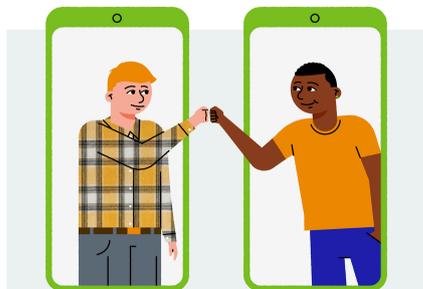
Telepsychiatry

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.



Youth Law - Legal Advice

Youth Law is available monthly (Tuesday) to provide free legal advice to young people on matters such as fines, debt, family issues, bullying, housing and criminal charges.



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



headspace is here for you over the holidays

As the end of the year approaches so too does a number of public holidays. During these times you can still get support for your mental health by:

- Creating a headspace account at <https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone.../create-account/>

Or

- You can connect with us 1-on-1 via **eheadspace** <https://headspace.org.au/online-and.../connect-with-us/>

Or

- Over the phone at 1800 650 890.

If you are in an emergency or need immediate assistance:

- Call emergency services on 000

If you need to speak to someone urgently, you can call:

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