



MEDIA RELEASE

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Headspace for Hilltops

There is an urgent need for improved mental health services in the Hilltops, where youth mental health and youth suicide have become critical issues over recent years. The Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) reported 130 intentional self-harm incidents in Hilltops between 2017 to 2019 with a very high rate of suicide of 14.7 per 100,000 people.

There are gaps in service access for young people and over half the hospitalisations of our youth, aged between 15 – 19 years are for mental health related disorders. In addition, many young people need help to cope with parental substance abuse, especially alcohol.

According to the latest MPHN data, rates of intentional self-harm are highest in Young, Cootamundra, Tumut and Leeton. However, there is no local centre in Hilltops to access support services outside of the hospital network.

“For some time, I have been listening to community concerns about the lack of mental health support for young people who require help within our region. Support unfortunately can be difficult to access and often requires travel out of the Hilltops LGA.” Said Hilltops Mayor Margaret Roles.

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation in Australia. It is a non-government organisation, funded by the Federal Government, that delivers mental health services to young people with an emphasis on youth-friendly environments and improved accessibility.

By establishing a Headspace service in Young, with outreach services into surrounding communities including Boorowa and Harden, support will be accessible to our young people and provide the Hilltop communities with the chance to break the tragic cycle of mental health, self-harm, attempted suicides, and suicides.

A petition has been launched by the Hilltops Youth Action Group to lobby the Federal Government to provide this service to our community. Signing this petition is your chance to make a difference to the young people of our Hilltops and ensure local access to support services.

The petition can be signed here: <https://chnq.it/PxT6NtBRVk> or via the Hilltops Council and Hilltops Youth Action Group Facebook pages, and at pop up locations in our towns and villages over the coming months.

“I ask everyone to support the youth of our beautiful Hilltops by signing the petition,” concluded Mayor Roles.

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