

Working together differently to build a person-centred mental health and wellbeing system



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Baugull nyungai Gurumba bigi Maroomba biggee

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, and of the many different nations across the wider Brisbane south region. We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging as the holders of the memories, the traditions, the culture and the spiritual wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation. We acknowledge any Sorry Business that may be affecting the communities as a whole.

In the spirit of reconciliation, partnership and mutual respect, we will continue to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to shape a health system which responds to the needs and aspirations of the community.

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About us

Brisbane South PHN (Primary Health Network) has a vision for the best possible health and wellbeing for every person in the Brisbane south region.

Our purpose is to partner to build a health and wellbeing system in which every person in the Brisbane south region, especially those with the greatest need, is supported to live well and experience care that is connected, high-quality and easy to access.

Get in touch with us via contactus@bsphn.org.au or call 1300 467 265.

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CEO Message

Brisbane south is home to approximately 23% of the Queensland population, or 1.2 million people. Our population continues to grow and is estimated to reach 1.4 million people by 2036 (Brisbane South PHN Health Needs Assessment 2018).

As a result, demand on our mental health system across primary care and tertiary services has risen. With the additional challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current mental health system is under pressure to meet growing demand - with services managing significantly higher caseloads than they were originally designed to support.

Over the past 4 years, demand for mental health services in Brisbane south has consistently risen. Demand for services supporting people with or at risk of mild mental illness (known as 'low intensity services') with quick, easy and efficient support has increased 8-fold; whilst demand for psychological therapies has nearly doubled and clinical care coordination increased 6-fold (Brisbane South PHN, 2022).

With such a huge increase in demand comes the opportunity for us to re-imagine how we co-plan, co-commission and co-deliver innovative services with our health system partners, including our state-funded hospital and health system partners, Metro South Health and Children's Health Queensland, to ensure we continue responding to the changing needs of our region.

How we partner, collaborate and lead health system reform is more critical than ever, and I'm incredibly proud of the results to date.

In this edition of Primary Health Impact, we explore how we've used existing resources, developed new ways of working, embraced technology and planned for the long-term.



As Queensland's largest PHN by population size, we call on all levels of government to commit to co-commissioning frameworks that will facilitate a more integrated, connected and responsive health system. Opportunities to co-design and co-commission services with health system partners enable us to better adapt and support integrated care pathways, and implement timely, place-based responses that meet the needs of our region.

We are deeply committed to shaping and evolving the role of PHNs as the State and Commonwealth's primary health care partner as we continue to build a person-centred mental health and wellbeing system for every Queenslanders.

I hope you enjoy this edition – please don't hesitate to drop me a line if you'd like to get in touch.

Kind regards
Mike Bosel
Chief Executive Officer

Social care delivers

Brisbane South PHN believes that all young people deserve to grow into adulthood with optimal mental health, with access to a health and wellbeing system that is connected, high quality and easy to access.

A new, mental health service launched in early 2022 offers integrated digital and face-to-face social care so that young people can access tailored support.

‘Our commitment to health system reform means that we constantly innovate and improve on how the health system can deliver care to young people,’ explains Jen Newbould, General Manager, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and other Drugs and Cultural Diversity, Brisbane South PHN. ‘The growth in service demand gave us opportunities to re-think how we work together to improve on integrated, person-centred care.’

Providing access to on-demand, tailored therapy online, as well as tools and programs guided by clinicians, career advisors and trained lived experience peers, MOST is delivered at a crucial time for young people and their families; providing support while they are waiting to access specific services and/or providing additional support that works in sync with face-to-face support.

‘Young people can now access support, from their phone, tablet or computer, where and when they need it. This blended model of care is one of the ways we’re enabling timely access to much-needed support,’ explains Jen.

‘It was critical to provide access for young people in areas where there are fewer services available like Beaudesert’ explains Jen. ‘We expanded access to other services we commission, like our child and adolescent psychosocial support program, to ensure that children and young people have integrated referral pathways and easy options to access support.’



‘I actually didn’t seek out any mental health care of any kind until I was nearly 20 years old, because I was terrified of paying ongoing costs,’ explains Jordan, a Youth Mental Health Support Worker and Consumer Advocate who speaks to the lived experience of young people.

‘I had significant mental health conditions when I was 16 to 17 years old that required long-term hospitalisation. It was hard to find out where to go next and who to talk to [to get support]. Connecting young people to digital support is a great and necessary addition to face-to-face services. This issue affects a lot of people my age, so connecting young people with digital support that supplements their care is a good idea.’

With funding from Queensland Health and Children’s Hospital Foundation, MOST was researched, developed and implemented by Orygen Digital, a leading youth mental health organisation. Brisbane South PHN contributed further funding so that MOST could be delivered more broadly within Brisbane south.

Kids gain skills to thrive

Children and young people aged up to 17 years of age make up more than 90,000 people of the growing Logan-Beaudesert region, based on a 2021 projection (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2022; ABS, 2017). Yet for children, adolescents and their families living with complex mental health concerns, accessing support locally was challenging. A new and unique service offering psychosocial support, commissioned by Brisbane South PHN in partnership with Metro South Health (MSH) Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS), has made a significant difference.

We recognised that support for children and adolescents requires more than clinical intervention alone, and advocated to the Commonwealth to utilise existing resources to fund local psychosocial supports, creating a new service that is unique within Australia. So far, it has received exceptional feedback from referring partners, families and young people.

‘This has 100% hit the nail on the head with what [my child] needs,’ explains one of our parents. ‘I’m really sad that it’s such a short program for us. If it can continue, I think [my child] would develop so much more. It seems to be one of a kind.’

‘Psychosocial support helps kids and their families develop skills for positive mental health and wellbeing,’ explains Jen Newbould, General Manager, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and other Drugs and Cultural Diversity, Brisbane South PHN. ‘It builds young people’s capacity and resilience across healthy relationships, daily living needs, physical wellbeing and confidence. For adolescents, they work on how to manage money, secure housing, pursue vocational or educational goals, or how to manage addictions. Without these fundamental skills and access to basic needs the impact on mental health is significant.’

The program is meeting the need of the “missing middle” and children requiring outreach support. For those young people who don’t meet the CYMHS criteria, or whose complex needs are too severe for primary care mental health services, it effectively identifies and engages with this highly valuable group and their families—who previously had limited or no support.

With more children and adolescents needing complex mental health services, the current health system is under significant pressure, with many kids unable to access support. This means that kids weren’t able to access support and were experiencing poor outcomes as a result.



'The service system is extremely stretched,' adds Jen. 'We are seeing increasing complexity and severity of mental health needs at younger ages. Whereas the support available is predominantly focused on those aged 12 and over.'

'In commissioning this support, we found that up to 70% of children and adolescents referred also needed clinical intervention, but had no access to it,' says Jen. 'In fact, only 11% of referrals had any kind of mental health support at all. In response to this need, we took the opportunity to integrate clinical care and coordination into the psychosocial support program to enable a more holistic response,' says Jen. 'We also shifted the model of care to support children as young as 7 years old and their families, based on the evidence of need presenting. The next step is to co-locate staff in local schools and community-based mental health services to make it even easier for kids and families to access the service.'

Brisbane South PHN commissioned Accoras to develop and deliver the psychosocial program and, so far, more than 286 children and adolescents have been supported and over 4150 service contacts delivered. '[It's meeting my needs] very well,' says one of our young participants. 'The person who came out figured out what I needed help with and has been doing a really good job helping me since then.'

Initial data analysis has also shown decreases in psychological symptoms for clients who have completed the program across both the 7 – 11 years and 12- 17 years age groups. A significant finding and strong indication of the positive impacts of this program.

With improved outcomes in school engagement and attendance, families have also reported improved family routines and better communication. 'We absolutely want integrated services that are easy to access and navigate ... but ultimately what we want is thriving families who are on a path to mental health and wellbeing.' said Jen.

DBT Project builds confidence and support

Despite more than 15,000 people in Brisbane south living with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and suicide ideation, health workers in Brisbane south have said they were often not well equipped with confidence, knowledge and skills on how to help.

The DBT Project is changing that.

Brisbane South PHN worked with Metro South Health Addiction and Mental Health Services (MSAMHS) to create The DBT Project, an important initiative designed to train health care and peer support workers to support people living with BPD.

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) is a highly effective method of supporting people who live with BPD, as well as people affected by trauma more broadly, to move away from harmful coping behaviours and towards lives that are personally meaningful and fulfilling to them.

'We felt good about being part of The DBT Project, because some of our staff have personally benefitted from DBT as part of their own therapy,' explains Eschleigh Balzamo, CEO of Brook RED; a PHN-commissioned service provider that provides community-based peer support to people with mental health concerns. 'Supporting evidence-based treatment from that personal perspective makes it even more meaningful to people seeking support. Most of all, we have been excited to offer DBT to people who might not be able to access it in any other settings.'

'The DBT Project demonstrates the strength of our partnership with our hospital and health service provider,' said Keir Leigh, Regional Development Manager, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and other Drugs, Brisbane South PHN. 'Since January 2022, 235 practitioners have been equipped with DBT skills and knowledge.'

'Our hospital and health system partner, Metro South Addiction and Mental Health Services (MSAMHS), proposed we work together on the DBT Project to bring together primary health care, peer support workers and DBT specialists to facilitate conversations, break down stigma and barriers, and promote collaboration and referrals to support people across our health system.'

Kathy Madson, a MSAMHS Social Work Clinical Specialist and DBT Workforce Development Officer, is one of the professionals who helped us roll out the project. She told us that people living with BPD often slip through the cracks without adequate support or understanding.

'People with BPD struggle to access services across the board,' she explains. 'Community-based mental health services traditionally excluded many people with BPD [based on clinical criteria], because they were considered too complex for these services to support. Whilst tertiary health services excluded them too, because their condition was considered not severe enough for admission, leaving gaping holes in the system. This project helps close that gap'.

'Ultimately, the goal is for all health care workers in Brisbane south to have the same baseline level skills to support people with BPD,' adds Keir. 'Together, we're working with MSAMHS, primary health care and peer support workers to also ensure that referral pathways are known and easily accessible, so that people access the care they need easily and seamlessly.'



Our impact

In 2022 our support so far has meant that:

Our websites were viewed
113,768 times

- bsphn.org.au
- yourcovid-19portal.org.au
- firstnationshealthfocus.org.au
- getreadyforbaby.com
- emergencychoices.org.au

235

health care workers were trained in Dialectical Behavioural Therapy to support people with Borderline Personality Disorder and suicidal ideation, in partnership with Metro South Health.

90

Primary Health Nurses were supported through our Practice Nurse Support Program to increase knowledge and skills necessary for better patient outcomes.



176

people from multicultural backgrounds improved their health literacy through our community education sessions.

49

First Nations people participated in our 2nd annual First Nations Health Forum to discuss community needs and concerns.

378

young children had health screening through our Thriving and on Track (TOTS) program.



953

older people accessed government-supported aged care programs via our Aged Care Navigator trials, Healthy Aging Hubs and Health Literacy Pilot.



52

SpotOnHealth HealthPathways (online clinical tools) were published, in partnership with Metro South Health.



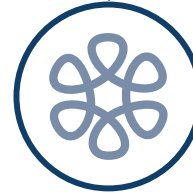
609

general practices and pharmacies were encouraged to ask people if they had been vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 through our 'Ask the question' campaign.



2,294

primary health care support sessions were delivered to general practices, providing digital health, quality improvement and overall support.



\$48.7 million

in funding was allocated by the Commonwealth to expand our Recognise, Respond, Refer (RRR) domestic and family violence program nationally.

Our impact from 1 January to 30 June 2022

Our member organisations

Brisbane South PHN has 21 members from across communities, not for profits, health and peak bodies who provide critical support for our work across policy, health reform and other matters - including opportunities to improve the mental health of people in Brisbane south. We are grateful for their guidance and expertise as we seek to support the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for every person.



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