

MEDIA RELEASE

Southport welcomes extra space for after-hours mental health care

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The northern Gold Coast's newest after-hours mental health facility is providing much needed support for adults experiencing distress when other mental health support services may not be open.

The Safe Space site in the Southport Health Precinct is an outcome of the [Joint Regional Plan](#) and the [Crisis Reform Initiative](#), and recognises that a hospital emergency room is most-often not the best place for someone experiencing mental health distress. It has been established in response to growing demand which has in part, been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Since opening its doors in October last year, the Southport Safe Space service has supported more than 60 adult and young adult mental health consumers at times when their usual supports and clinicians were unavailable. Of the more than 170 attendances to the service in that time, 118 were identified by the consumer as being accessed as an alternative to the emergency department.

Gold Coast Health's Executive Director for Mental Health and Specialist Services Malcolm McCann said the drop-in service is part of a broader plan to divert mental health consumers in crisis away from emergency departments to spaces that better suit their needs at the time.

"This service is a significant boost to the existing mental health services available on the Gold Coast for people who are experiencing mental health vulnerability and need after-hours support, but not in the emergency department," Mr McCann said.

The development of the Southport site has been a collaborative effort, through a partnership between Gold Coast Primary Health Network and Gold Coast Health, with the service operators Primary and Community Care Services (PCCS). The Queensland Government provided more than \$610,000 in funding for the new service.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network CEO Matt Carrodus said the Australian Government Department of Health provided more than half a million dollars to fund a similar service at Mermaid Beach which was at capacity.

"We believe this funding will help to make a huge difference to people seeking a friendly space during times of mental health distress," Mr Carrodus said. "I encourage GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists, primary health and community support services, schools or the families of young people who may require assistance, to contact PCCS."

PCCS CEO, Associate Professor JR Baker, said the Safe Space Hub will keep people safe by offering a community-based afterhours service that ultimately strives to reduce suicide rates.

“The hub makes it easier for people to access help, in a welcoming environment that looks more like a café than a typical clinical space,” said Dr Baker.

“Our peer support workers and clinical teams are here to look after people in distress, so they feel they have a place to go where they feel safe and supported and can build on their skills to look after their wellbeing and manage their mental health without having to go to hospital.”

The Southport Safe Space is located at the Southport Health Precinct, Level 3, 16-30 High Street, Southport and is open from 6pm-9pm Monday to Friday and 12pm-8pm on weekends. Consumers do not need a referral or an appointment to attend.

The Southport Safe Space uses the same model of care as the Safe Space Hub in Mermaid Beach.

This service complements the 24-hour Gold Coast phone mental health hotline, 1300 MH CALL, and provides a pathway if required, to GPs and other mental health providers or Gold Coast Health mental health services such as the Crisis Stabilisation Unit at Robina Hospital.

More details are available at: <https://gcphn.org.au/commissionedservices/after-hours-safe-space>.

Suicide Support Services

For a full list of suicide prevention services on the Gold Coast, visit:

<https://gcphn.org.au/community/suicide-support-services>

Crisis Support

- **Dial Triple Zero (000):** If you or someone you are with is in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to you or others, call Triple Zero (000)
- **Lifeline Australia:** Phone 13 11 14. Web: www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/i-m-feeling-suicidal
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** Phone: 1300 659 467. Web: www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **The Mental Health Access Line:** Phone: 1300 MH (1300 64 2255)
- **Beyond Blue Support Service:** Phone: 1300 22 4636, Web: www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Mates in Construction:** Phone: 1300 642 111. Web: www.matesinconstruction.org.au
- **Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service:** 1800 512 348. Web: <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/>

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