



An Australian Government Initiative

Gippsland PHN

Primary Health Planning in Rural Victoria

A case study: Gippsland South Coast sub-region



An Australian Government Initiative

What does Gippsland PHN do?

Gippsland PHN vision and objectives:

- Right care, right time, right place
- Improving health outcomes
- Responding to national and local priorities
- Increasing efficiency and effectiveness of services

Strategic health planning is a key mission area



Why Gippsland PHN Commissioned this Project

- Benefits of a sub-regional approach to planning and commissioning
- Three rural health services in the South Coast of Gippsland (Local Government Areas of Bass Coast and South Gippsland)
- Development of a sub-regional Clinical Services Plan
- Gippsland PHN partnering on primary health component



Victoria: Gippsland PHN Catchment





Project Context and Opportunity

- No overarching national primary health plan
- Hospital centric health system
- Demarcation issues: **State Commonwealth, Public/Private, Acute/Primary health**
- Disconnected projects: **Health Care Homes, Mental health, After-Hours Services, Chronic Disease**
- Workforce, access to services and sustainability issues in rural and remote areas
- NDIS and My Aged Care reforms
- Stop “admiring the problem” and describe solutions



Plan Catchment

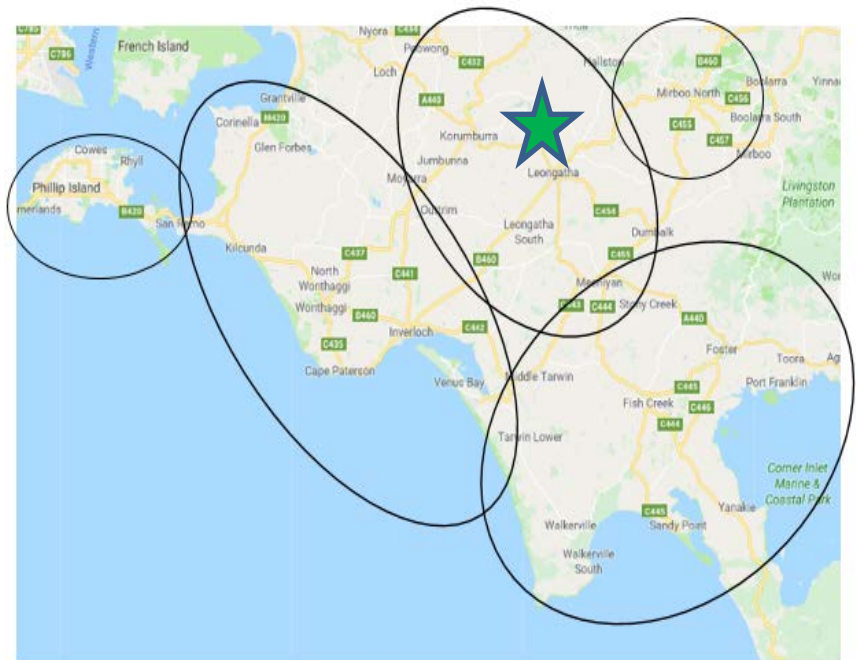
- Gippsland South Coast
- Total population 63,000 which grows to 100,000 over the summer period
- Conducted demographic and health issue analysis
- Geographic:
 - A number of small to medium size towns
 - Combination of rural and regional, one small remote
- Important for planning to occur at a micro level – services are idiosyncratic
- 4 hospitals (one with ED/ three with Urgent Care Centres), multi purpose services, 15 general practices
- Usual issues attached to a growing rural population







Local Planning Approach

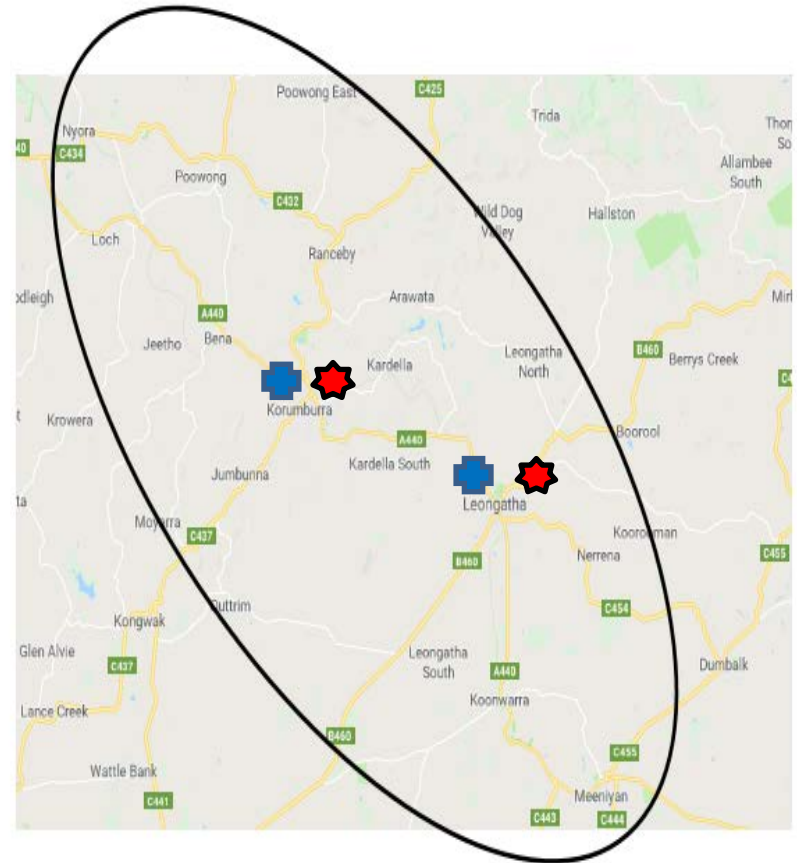
- Split the catchment into five focus locations
- Acknowledge primary health requires micro planning in rural areas
- Result to be micro primary health plan for each sub region and towns
- Leongatha/Korumburra location





Micro Planning Area

- Planning area (60 kms x 25 kms)
- Population size (approx. 18,300)
- Distribution/number & size towns – 8 main towns
- Distance to service
- Hospitals 
- Medical practices 
- Transport
- Clinical Council
- Population Demographics





Plan Focus

- Develop a primary health plan for Gippsland South Coast
- Build on existing health needs analysis and service mapping
- Objective to develop more robust primary health services outside hospitals
- Plan a more integrated team based primary health system
- Respond to key issues effecting health system including:
 - Medical service availability
 - ED presentations
 - After hours services
 - Avoidable hospital admissions
 - Mental health
 - Chronic health management
- Maximise effective use of currently available funding, especially MBS
- Benchmark adequate service levels in locations



Plan Methodology

- Deliberative focus on GPs and medical practices
- Understanding relevant State/Commonwealth policy environment
- Existing data analysis; health needs; demographics; service mapping
- Presentation to Gippsland PHN Clinical Council
- Consulted in person with 50% of GPs, all 4 major hospitals, key NGOs, 2 local governments
- Aggregated micro plan to a more macro plan
- Distilled findings
- Developed the plan



Plan Methodology - Questions

Questions were developed for different organisations consulted in the development of the plan

Key questions for general practices included:

1. What are the unmet primary health needs in your local community?
2. What professions/services are missing which could create a best practice primary care team in your practice?
3. What are the barriers to establishing this team?
4. Do you believe better team based care in your practice would better address key issues in health system i.e. ED presentation; avoidable hospital admissions; better after hours services improved chronic illness and mental health services?
5. What previous initiatives have helped you improve your practice?



Key Themes Emerging

- Opportunities to improve integration
- Opportunity to resource and invest in general practices (not GPs)
- Opportunity to improve connection between private and public
- Further develop infrastructure for comprehensive primary health care outside hospitals
- Improve response to increased ED presentations
- Improve access to after-hours medical services
- Better utilise MBS funding to achieve integration, and address waiting times, particularly for hospitals and non-government organisations
- Opportunities to improve GPs and State Government services interface
i.e. Urgent Care Services and After Hours



An Australian Government Initiative

Next Steps

- Gippsland PHN will continue partnering with health services and Primary and Community Partnership on development of primary health component of Clinical Services Plan.
- Consideration of opportunities such as:
 - Greater investment in general practices, allied and mental services
 - Seek community and stakeholder support for a locally relevant and accessible health system.
 - Make better use of MBS and other funding sources to achieve integrated best practice i.e. purchase and plan for integration.
- Address market failure (e.g., new and emerging small towns don't have local health services)



An Australian Government Initiative

Questions?