



Caring for Our Port Stephens Youth (COPSY) Inc.

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Research Study on the needs of youth in Port Stephens

Caring for Our Port Stephens Youth (COPSY Inc.) is seeking expressions of interest for a study of the mental health needs of youth in Port Stephens. COPSY is looking not only for input on the terms of reference for such a study but also for organisations that would be interested in conducting the study. Input from organisations that may wish to bid for the study can be kept confidential.

Previous research

In 2016, COPSY commissioned a similar study from the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health at the University of Newcastle. This study can be found at <https://www.copsy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/PS-youth-mental-health-report-FINAL.pdf>

The 2016 study was considered by a round table of community leaders in January 2017 and led to COPSY making local, affordable (free) youth mental health counselling its first priority.

The jupiter counselling service

The formal launch of the jupiter counselling service was in March 2019 when it had opened its first two rooms at the Salamander Bay Library and Community Complex. Since then, rooms have been opened in Tanilba Bay ('Till Place' in conjunction with the Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre) in April 2021 and Raymond Terrace in April 2022.

The jupiter service was initially aimed at youth aged 12-18 and this has been widened to those aged 12-21. It is an early intervention service that is inclusive of all youth. COPSY is a-political and not associated with any religious organisation.

The initial focus on youth mental health counselling has been broadened to include the promotion of wellbeing¹ in partnership with a local gym and other joint initiatives.

Time for a new study

COPSY believes it is now time to refresh the 2016 study. That study was asked to look at causes of mental illness, which is not considered necessary for the next study. Some of the possible research questions below stray into strategy. Clearly the final terms of reference and research methods will affect the cost of the study. At this stage, COPSY is open to suggestions about what will provide best value for money.

Our first thoughts about the objectives of the new study (and your ideas are sought) are:

1. What are the remaining gaps in support of the wellbeing of young people in Port Stephens? The 2016 study identified what was available at that time and what could be done to improve services.
2. What are the community level measures of improvement in the wellbeing of youth? The jupiter service measures improvements in the health of each of its clients. But at the time of the 2016 study data at the

1. The wellbeing of young people is inclusive of social, physical and mental health, with a focus on wellness and resilience.

level of the Port Stephens LGA was scant, so the baseline it provided is not as good as we would like.
What is available now?

3. What are the implications for COPSYP/jupiter of the relevant key Commonwealth (e.g. 5th National MH Suicide Prevention Plan) and NSW government (e.g. Living Well) policies and HNECC PHN Mental Health Regional Plan 2020-2025?
4. What more could COPSYP and jupiter do in working with youth, schools, GPs and with other youth services to improve the effectiveness of services for youth?
5. What should COPSYP focus on next? There are now 3 jupiter service centres in Port Stephens.
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current COPSYP/jupiter model compared with similar your services such as Headspace and KYDS?
7. What can other similar organisations teach us about improving the jupiter service?

COPSYP would like input from you on both possible terms of reference and also on your possible interest in undertaking the next study by the end of August.

Emails and questions should be addressed to secretarycopsy@gmail.com

After your input on the possible terms of reference have been considered, an invitation to tender will be offered to those organisations capable of undertaking a new study.

Selection criteria for the next study will depend on TOR. For the original study, these criteria were

- A statement demonstrating the consultants understanding of the brief;
- A budget and draft methodology that outlines tasks, timelines and key progress points that will be used to satisfy the desired outcomes of the project; and
- Details of relevant projects previously undertaken by the organisation and recent experience of personnel who will undertake research.

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