

# headspace

## Strategic Plan

### 2012-2015



**headspace**

National Youth Mental Health Foundation



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# Overview

Strategic planning provides the opportunity to look forward, determine the future we would like, create a shared vision – and then plan how to get there. For **headspace**, this vision is to improve the mental, social and emotional wellbeing of young people in Australia.

The importance of this vision is well-defined. Youth mental health is undoubtedly one of this nation's biggest health and economic challenges, with 1 in 4 young people experiencing mental health difficulties at any one time.

Fortunately, the need for a targeted, comprehensive investment in early intervention for youth mental health has been acknowledged by governments across the party lines. Initiated under the Coalition in 2005-06, and then significantly scaled up by the current Australian Government in subsequent years, most notably in the 2011 Mental Health Reform Budget package, **headspace** has bi-partisan support as the Commonwealth's direct service response to youth mental health.

With **headspace** centres rapidly being established across the country and expanding to 90 by 2015, **ehespace** establishing its place as a major provider of online support to Australia's youth, and the **headspace** School Support program being implemented nationally, it is easy to forget just how young our organisation is. **headspace** is an extremely successful organisation but it is also still a developing organisation. This document sets the objectives and strategy for the next stage of its development – Formalisation.

Even in an innovative, responsive organisation like **headspace**, we recognise that to build an integrated service system for youth mental health, you need good systems and processes. You need a solid workforce, sustained community awareness and engagement, strong quality and performance monitoring systems, a strong evidence base and robust infrastructure and internal capability to drive growth.

We don't want to just get services out into the community. We want them to be the best services, underpinned by the best evidence, delivered by the most skilled people, supported by the best infrastructure and service partnerships. We are successful in **headspace** because young people are at the forefront of everything that we do. Youth advocacy and engagement will continue to be central to our future work program as we strive to develop **headspace** into an integrated suite of services that support seamless transitions for young people and build capacity for more individually-tailored approaches.

These are ambitious aspirations that will require a dedicated strategic focus for the next three years around getting it right, bedding down and consolidating our approach so that it can be successfully replicated around the country to deliver a truly national service. But, we know that if we do these things and hold to our values, we will become a global leader in youth mental health.

The following pages set out our strategic plan and what it means for **headspace**. This plan balances our ambitions with the achievable, and sets a clear and important course for **headspace** now and in future years. We commend it to you.



**Wendy McCarthy AO**  
Chair



**Chris Tanti**  
CEO



Today, **headspace** is the major provider of clinical, early intervention services specifically targeting youth mental health across the country.

# Who we are

## About headspace

Established in 2006, **headspace**, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, was first funded by the Federal Government to deliver youth-friendly, stigma-free services at a number of locations around Australia. Today, **headspace** is the major provider of clinical, early intervention services specifically targeting youth mental health across the country. Administered and supported by **headspace** national office, a network of 40 centres are currently contracted across every state and territory, set to scale up to 90 centres by 2015.

Since 2011, **headspace** has also been funded to deliver a clinical e-mental health service, **eheadspace**, that is extending the reach of the **headspace** platform more broadly, particularly in harder to reach, rural and remote communities. Additionally, in 2012, **headspace** commenced implementation of a national initiative providing support to secondary schools affected by suicide.

To ensure **headspace** centres are high performing organisations that can deliver on national objectives for the program, they are supported by national office infrastructure. Along with coordination and grant administration, **headspace** national office has a service capacity building function through such activities as training and education, driving community engagement and awareness raising, as well as undertaking research and evaluation and translating this into practice.

Further information about our services can be found on page 18.

## The headspace team

The **headspace** team is made up of a diverse range of clinical, professional, administrative and other support staff employed within services or as part of the national office contracted by the Australian Government to administer the program. Regardless of the role performed, be it delivering services in person or online, building the evidence base in youth mental health, strengthening community awareness and advocacy, or supporting all of these services to deliver care to young Australians, we all contribute to delivering **headspace**.

All of us are here to ensure that young people get the right kind of support they need, when they need it.

Whatever we do, and wherever we work in the **headspace** organisation, we are always aware of our goal: to help young people become healthier, happier and more resilient.

# Where we are going

## Our vision

To improve young people's mental, social and emotional wellbeing through the provision of high quality, integrated services when and where they are needed.





# Our values

**Compassionate** – We listen and want to make a difference for young people

**Inclusive** – We value a diversity of opinion and background

**Responsive** – We are agile, flexible and move rapidly

**Passionate** – We believe in what we do and enjoy what we do

**Leaders** – We are innovative, thought leaders and valued partners





## Our strategic objectives

**headspace** has set the following five strategic objectives for 2012 – 2015 that build on our past achievements and will support fulfilling our vision going forward.

These objectives are interrelated as success in one is dependent on success in another. A range of linked core activities and strategic projects will be undertaken over the life of the plan toward achievement of these objectives. These are outlined on the following pages.







**1. Awareness** – Build awareness of who headspace is and what it does

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**2. Access** – Enhance access to appropriate services for all young people

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**3. Integration** – Provide seamless services that are responsive to the individual needs of young people

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**4. Sustainability** – Develop a long term, sustainable funding approach with multiple funding streams

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**5. Effectiveness** – Deliver the best, most effective model through continued research and validation

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## **Our objectives**

### **The aims of our organisation**

#### **Awareness**

Build awareness of who **headspace** is and what it does

#### **Access**

Enhance access to appropriate services for all young people

#### **Integration**

Provide seamless services that are responsive to the individual needs of young people

#### **Sustainability**

Develop a long term, sustainable funding approach with multiple funding streams

#### **Effectiveness**

Deliver the best, most effective model through continued research and validation

### **The headspace vision**

**To improve young people's mental, social and emotional wellbeing through the provision of high quality, integrated services when and where they are needed.**

## Our core activities

### The core activities we will undertake

#### Clinical Programs

- Provide a network of evidence-based, youth-friendly early intervention services focused on mental health, drug and alcohol, physical health and vocational support for young people
- Establish 10 to 15 new sustainable **headspace** centres each year, reaching up to 90 by 30 June 2015
- Enhance and expand the **eheadspace** and **headspace** School Support programs in a way that integrates with centres and expands the choices available for young people

#### Quality and Innovation

- Support and enhance the quality of what and how we deliver services for young people
- Continue to build evidence-based practice in what works best for young people in the **headspace** program and youth mental health more broadly

#### Workforce

- Build capacity in the **headspace** workforce through targeted activities that respond to workforce shortages
- Provide effective education and training across **headspace** services to support high-quality, safe care for young people while remaining responsive to emerging evidence and new models of care

#### Advocacy and Engagement

- Continue awareness raising and community engagement to facilitate early help seeking in young people
- Undertake advocacy and provide a voice for young people and youth mental health

#### Information management and infrastructure

- Deliver the right system and data to drive operational performance, meet our obligations, improve our programs and manage our risk

#### Business Capability

- Enhance internal procedures and processes to ensure **headspace** growth is underpinned by solid foundations

## Our measures

### The way we will measure our success

- Increased numbers of young people across different cohorts accessing **headspace** services
- Improved access for hard to reach groups
- Number of centres opened each year
- Improvement in young people's mental, social and emotional wellbeing
- Increased cross referral between **headspace** services and the broader service system
- Increased awareness of **headspace** within the community
- Increased levels of funding leveraged through the **headspace** platform

# Our major projects

To deliver our core activities and strengthen the **headspace** model, we will focus on the following roadmap projects

## Quality and innovation

*Support and enhance the quality of what and how we deliver services to young people*

**headspace** will continue to adopt a continuous improvement approach to implementation of the **headspace** model through the development of better systems and ongoing training of **headspace** staff.

**headspace** has strong but separate clinical governance frameworks across clinical programs and our aim is to integrate these into one robust consistent framework. We will embed quality improvement processes across all areas and all centres over the next three years.

**headspace** will also continue to develop the evidence base for what we do, and translate the learnings into better clinical practice. We will also be an active participant in an independent evaluation of the measure.

## Advocacy and engagement

*Share the **headspace** knowledge through different channels to leverage system reform in youth mental health*

**headspace** is a voice for young people and advocates on their behalf. We have worked to promote and educate, as well as reduce stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues. We will continue to advocate for young people, their friends and families and utilise our youth reference group.

Over the next three years we will build on this through integrated communications and marketing projects aimed at raising levels of awareness of our services amongst hard to reach groups such as young men and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

We will tell the '**headspace** story' – from inception to present to promote awareness of **headspace** in the community. We will also develop online applications, including mobile phone applications, that will increase young people's access to and engagement with **headspace** services.

## Clinical programs

*Undertake projects to facilitate the roll out of centres and develop clinical programs and supporting modalities for young people*

**headspace** has a robust process for the support and administration of clinical programs within centres, **ehespace** and **headspace** School Support. Over the next three years we intend to strengthen this further to better support the growing network of centres.

The next step is to fully integrate all service programs to provide young people with a seamless service, regardless of whether they choose face to face services within a centre, online, or telephone.

We will implement **headspace** School Support over the next 12 months across all states and territories. Once established, **headspace** will look at broadening support to increase our capacity to support schools and universities in the area of suicide prevention.

## Information management and infrastructure

*Deliver the right system and data to drive operational performance, meet our obligations, improve our programs and manage our risk*

**headspace** has a secure reliable Information Technology and Communications (ITC) platform. We will continue to review and develop our ITC systems to ensure **headspace** has the right infrastructure to meet our growing needs, provides a secure framework and can adapt to changes in technology and business needs as appropriate.

We will improve data collection for all clinical programs: centres, **eheadspace** and **headspace** School Support, to enable us to evaluate, validate and improve the service model. We will also look to develop an integrated internal monitoring and reporting system to assist all areas of **headspace** in the management of the business.

## Workforce

*Make sure our people are at the core of each outcome and our workforce is developed to drive desired outcomes for young people*

The delivery of quality healthcare is reliant on a strong and committed workforce. **headspace** has been successful because of the efforts of its highly skilled and dedicated workforce nationally, who are committed to the vital work we do.

As we expand our clinical services nationally it is vital that we have a workforce strategy that will support our expansion, enabling our clinical services to recruit, capacity build and retain scarce human capital resources.

We will also develop a **headspace** wide education and training strategy that meets the needs of a growing and developing workforce and ensure that clinical best practice is adopted.

## Business capability

*Develop the right processes and internal systems to continue to grow and expand **headspace**, to support young people*

Business capability supports effective and efficient service provision. The rapid and expansive growth of **headspace** has placed significant importance on ensuring that we have good systems and capability in place in terms of finances, governance and reputation. We will look for opportunities to grow the **headspace** initiative, establish other clinical programs (where appropriate) and fill gaps in the delivery of services to young people.

We will review the way **headspace** operates to ensure it continues to work for us and the young people we support. We will develop strong partnerships and look at opportunities to diversify funding sources.

# Where we are today

Looking back over the period of the last strategic plan, **headspace** made significant advances against its strategic objectives.

Here is a snapshot of achievements for 2011-2012:



## Service delivery

*headspace will provide services and develop partnerships to improve the wellbeing of as many young people as we can*



- A further 10 **headspace** centres were established and became operational in 2011-12. The selection process to select the next tranche of sites (Round 4), was successfully progressed, with 14 lead agencies engaged by 30 June 2012 to establish centres that will become operational by January 2013.
- Additional funding was secured, providing funding for 90 centres by 2015 and with a sustainable funding base for each site.
- As at 30 June 2012, **headspace** centres saw over 67,700 young people.
- Approximately 6% of all young people seen in centres were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI). An ATSI taskforce was established to ensure our service model is responsive and maintaining a strong reach into ATSI communities.
- State Manager positions were created to provide a more direct form of support to centres.
- Established a clinical quality and risk management group to set the agenda for quality and safety in centres and other **headspace** programs.
- Clinical governance guidelines for centres were developed and implemented.
- The national **ehheadspace** youth online and telephone support service was established and as at 30 June 2012, had serviced over 5,000 young people nationally.
- The **headspace** School Support service program commenced rollout – providing support to secondary schools affected by the suicide of a student.

# Advocacy

*headspace will advocate for the needs of young people and their families, acting as a primary reference point for youth mental health*

- The **headspace** Youth National Reference Group (hYNRG) was established as a key consultation point on all **headspace** activities. hYNRG feedback shaped the direction of the **headspace** service model, **headspace** marketing campaign, fact sheet development, website material, policy submissions and more.
- hYNRG representatives sat on all board subcommittees/advisory groups/taskforces and were involved in a range of youth community engagement activities.
- With help of hYNRG, the Youth Participation and Community Engagement Handbook 2011 was developed.
- **headspace** submitted multiple policy submissions and appeared before a number of parliamentary committees.
- A National Friends and Family Advisory Committee was established to recognise the importance of the families and friends of young people in our service delivery model.





## National reference point

*headspace will be the definitive voice for service delivery, research and development, service reform and community engagement, and advocacy in youth mental health*

- An array of community awareness and engagement activities were undertaken to raise mental health literacy and increase help seeking behaviours of young people, including participation in a number of national and local events such as Big Day Out and Sydney Mardi Gras.
- **headspace** launched a new national advertising campaign to promote awareness and drive young people to services. We worked closely with and supported **headspace** centres to achieve consistent messaging around the new campaign and to support local awareness raising.
- The promotion of help seeking and mental health literacy raising was strengthened through an increased **headspace** presence in youth preferred communication mediums, such as the **headspace** website, Twitter, Facebook and other social media outlets.
- **headspace** fostered partnerships with media providers including Heywire, Yahoo 7, Network 10, Hoyts, AFL Players Association and others.

# Research and development

*headspace will collaborate to expand knowledge about early intervention in youth mental health and to promote the reform of services*

- The **headspace** Centre of Excellence (CoE) conducted research and analysis to provide evidence based resources for young people and evidence maps for service providers in a range of priority areas: depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, psychotic disorders, suicide and self-harm, anxiety, and substance use disorders.
- A Research and Evaluation Strategy, and evaluation frameworks, were developed for each major program.
- A number of collaborative research projects commenced, including with the Australian National University e-couch project. Several research grants were applied for, including in collaboration with research partners.
- **headspace** became an essential participant partner in the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (YAW-CRC).
- We worked to redevelop our approach to knowledge transfer and translating evidence into practice across the **headspace** program during 2011-12.
- An annual training calendar was developed that targets clinicians across all **headspace** services as well as the managers of **headspace** centres.
- Expanded opportunities for training were supported by adopting webinars for increased provision of training more efficiently and developed an on-line resource library.
- The number of Clinical Learning Networks increased from two per annum to five, with participation broadened to include managers, clinicians, GPs and lead agencies.



A person in a blue shirt and dark pants stands with their back to the camera, looking out over a calm lake. The water reflects the surrounding trees and sky. At the top of the page, there are colorful, abstract graphic elements including curved lines in yellow, green, and blue, and several 'D' characters in various colors and orientations.

## Service reform and community engagement

*headspace will encourage change and promote the delivery of evidence-based, locally-integrated, coordinated services through effective partnerships*

- A range of national partnerships were progressed to strengthen the **headspace** service platform and service model, including with Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services for vocational outcomes and St John of God for Drug and Alcohol and Dual diagnosis.
- The **headspace** consortium model is foundational to leveraging broader change and broadening young people's access to a range of related services. **headspace** strengthened its centre consortium model to include at a minimum organisations from the four core streams of **headspace** service delivery – mental health, physical health, drug and alcohol, and vocational support.
- As youth advocates, **headspace** sat on multiple federal and state level advisory committees and specialist groups to inform policy and service delivery.
- **headspace** promoted change through working with a range of other national and state/territory based organisations.

# Our centres and services

**headspace** provides support and advice to young people aged 12-25 years across Australia through centres; online and on the telephone through **eheadspace**; and in schools through the **headspace** School Support program.



\* Opening late 2012 / 2013  
# Location to be confirmed

**headspace**  
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

Level 2, South Tower  
485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Tel +61 3 9027 0100 Fax +61 3 9027 0199  
[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)