SERVICES OR PROGRAM ENTRY
PART B TEMPLATE

CATEGORY: MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

ENTRY TITLE: LIVE4LIFE: RURAL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

NAME OF APPLICANT: JOSEPHINE WRIGHT

ORGANISATION: YOUTH LIVE4LIFE LTD

Additional Information about Entry (1 x A4 page).
Please expand upon the brief description given in Part A.

Live4Life is founded on the belief that all young people should have the mental health support they need when they need it.

Young people growing up in rural and regional communities face challenges which are distinct from those in metropolitan areas, and have significantly less access to mental health services. They are at greater risk than their metro counterparts of anxiety, depression, self harm and suicide.

Live4Life was developed in a single local government area in 2010. It was a decisive and groundbreaking community response to a reported increase in anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide amongst the young people of the Macedon Ranges. It was an approach, moreover, which centred young people themselves in a prevention strategy and, for the first time ever, brought a broad range of community organisations together to support them.

In the Live4Life model, communities i) establish partnerships among local organisations (often for the first time) to drive implementation and provide oversight, ii) deliver evidence-based mental health education in schools and to adults in the wider community, and iii) train young leaders in Years 9 and 10 as Mental Health Ambassadors.

The model has gone on to be implemented in 14 communities across Victoria and Tasmania. There are currently over 20 communities more who have expressed interest in implementing the life-changing program.

Live4Life only comes to communities when invited. When a community has identified a need for youth mental health support and has seen in Live4Life an approach which suits their needs.

Implementation of Live4Life in a community is governed by local School and Community Partnership Groups, made up of representatives from local government, health and community services, secondary schools, and others. Currently, 124 organisations are active members across our communities. As with the founding community of the Macedon Ranges, these Partnership Groups are often the first time that community organisations have come together to support young people in this way.

Young people are at the heart of the Live4Life model. In 2025, 8,896 young people received evidence-based mental health education — improving their mental health literacy and ability to offer and seek help, while reducing stigma through the annual program of events and activities. The total number of young people living in rural and regional communities who have received evidence-based mental health education since the program began is now approaching 40,000.

In 2025, 325 young people joined the Live4Life Crew and were trained and mentored to support their peers as Mental Health Ambassadors. In total, 1,800 young people have joined the Live4Life Crew. Live4Life is a whole-of-community program. While young people are the focus, 488 adults were trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid® in 2025, taking the total number of adults trained since Live4Life began to over 3,600.

Address the following Criteria (max. 10 X A4 pages).

1. Evidence of a significant contribution to the field of mental health on a local, state or national level.

Live4Life is:

- Aligned with the National Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Aligned with the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Aligned with the National Preventive Health Strategy (2021–2030)
- Highlighted as a case study in the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System final report
- Included in the Victorian Suicide Prevention and Response Implementation Plan (2024-2026)
- Funded by the National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program
- An accredited organisation with Suicide Prevention Australia

Evidence of Live4Life's effectiveness has been demonstrated by multiple rigorous, independent evaluations over 15 years, which have confirmed the Live4Life model's:

- Effectiveness in suicide prevention and mental health promotion in rural and regional communities
- Transferability to diverse rural and regional settings
- Long-term benefits
- Evidence of increased mental health literacy

This continuous evaluation includes five years of programmatic evaluations in the Macedon Ranges, as well as multi-year independent evaluations published by Orygen in 2017, Ludowyk Consulting in 2020, the University of Melbourne's Centre for Mental Health and Community Wellbeing in 2025 and the University of Tasmania in 2026.

The 2020 Ludowyk two-year evaluation final report found:

- 90% or more young people were having conversations about mental health
- Live4Life communities were more networked and resilient
- 82% of adults were far more confident after training to support a young person with a mental health need (compared with 32% before training)
- 65% of young people found Live4Life useful that year
- 75% of young people expected it to be useful in the future
- People were kinder to one another

Live4Life's first community outside Victoria in the rural shire of Break O'Day, Tasmania, has had its first two years evaluated by the University of Tasmania. The final report published in February 2026 found:

- 68% of students found Teen Mental Health First Aid education useful (80% believe it will be useful in the future)
- 80% of students discussed mental health with friends after the education
- 34.6% helped someone seek support; 30.8% sought help themselves
- 67.9% of students would now tell a trusted adult if a friend was struggling (up from 31%)
- Confidence to support peers increased from 34.5% to 67.9% among students
- 88.9% of adults felt confident supporting young people (up from 45%)
- Understanding that mental health is a real medical issue rose from 44.8% to 82.1% among students
- Crew members' confidence increased from 65% to 86%
- 71.4% of students felt teachers cared about them (up from 48.3%)
- 57.1% of students found it easier to talk to teachers (up from 34.5%)

Programmatic data and documented critical incidents demonstrate that Live4Life plays a critical role in early identification and intervention when young people are at high risk of suicide, including where intent has been disclosed. Through timely escalation and connection to appropriate supports, there are multiple instances each year where intervention has contributed to preventing loss of life.

"I've said it many times that Live4Life really, truly saved my life. And not just because it gave me the knowledge, but because it gave my friends the knowledge that they needed in order to recognise how bad things got for me during high school."

Past Crew member

"Live4Life saved my daughter's life."

Parent

"Live4Life is not just a program; it's a catalyst for positive change, and its benefits extend far beyond the school environment."

Leader of Student Wellbeing

"The Live4Life case study illustrates an example of a local organisation driving change in young people's lives."

Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Final Report

"Live4Life is a remarkable program, providing regional and rural young people and the communities that support them with the tools to identify, understand and assist when mental health concerns arise. This program holds young people at the centre by providing the opportunity for young people to challenge the stigma, and support their peers through youth led and directed projects. South Gippsland Shire Council is proud to partner with Youth Live4Life."

Cr Mohya Davies, Mayor, South Gippsland Shire Council

2. Evidence of innovation and/or recognised best practice

Live4Life is one of the only integrated youth mental health prevention models designed specifically for rural and regional communities. Other programs deliver mental health education in schools and communities. What makes Live4Life unique is that it embeds that education in a whole-of-community approach, building layers of protective relationships which reinforce, amplify and support good mental health practices recommended in the education. Unlike stand-alone school-based programs or service-based interventions, Live4Life integrates education, youth leadership and community governance into a single model, creating reinforcing layers of support rather than one-off interventions.

At one end, Live4Life builds highly networked communities with the School and Community Partnership Groups. Currently, 124 organisations are active members across our communities. These Partnership Groups are often the first time that community organisations have come together to support young people in this way. A two-year Victorian State Government-funded independent evaluation of Live4Life (Ludowyk Evaluation 2018–19) presented a final report which demonstrated that Live4Life communities are 'more networked and resilient'. The establishment of these formal structures and relationships conveys benefits which extend far beyond the delivery of the Live4Life program, proving invaluable in postvention responses, or mobilising in the event of natural disaster, or dealing with multiple stressors which disproportionately affect rural and regional communities.

Deep at the heart of Live4Life, the other innovative feature is the central importance of young people's agency in the program. After going through Year 8 Teen Mental Health First Aid education, young people in Years 9 and 10 volunteer to become Mental Health Ambassadors as part of a local Live4Life Crew, where they receive further mental health education, media and event-planning training. The Crews become mental health leaders in their communities, promoting positive mental health messaging and delivering events and activities. They act as critical role models for the younger cohort at their school, using their skills and knowledge to promote mental health awareness and create cultural change.

Engaging effectively with young people is Live4Life's highest priority. In consultation with key stakeholders across five Live4Life communities, including Advisers, Youth Workers, Coordinators, Crew Champions and young people in Crew4Life, in 2025 Live4Life co-designed a tailored suite of resources to support communities with a best practice Crew Engagement Toolkit. The resources include a Crew workbook (online and printed), a dedicated Crew webpage, youth-friendly Live4Life illustrated explainer and animation, sixteen videos (12 scripted and presented by Crew Champions), a library of templates and ideas for mental health promotion events/activities, and Live4Life-branded hand-out cards with help-seeking information. Subjects explored in the videos include: best practice youth participation, co-designing and planning youth-led events, Crew themes and posters, strengths-based skill development, self-care, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

This toolkit, housed in our e-learning hub, provides youth workers with easy access to a comprehensive guide on how best to engage, motivate, inspire, upskill and empower young people in Live4Life Crews — all in a way which is inclusive and amplifies the voices of young people in rural and regional communities. The toolkit reduces workloads and increases efficiency, stepping youth workers through all the stages involved in working with young people in Crew.

3. Evidence of participation of mental health consumers in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of mental health service/program delivery. Evidence of prioritising an increased level of engagement and influence of consumers where higher-level participation, such as authentic co-design, is in place.

Live4Life is intentionally designed as a community-driven, participatory model, where young people and community members are active contributors rather than passive recipients. Participation is embedded structurally through the Crew (youth leadership), Partnership Groups (community governance), and participatory evaluation approaches.

Young people hold genuine influence within the Live4Life model. Through student-led Crews, they shape how mental health information is communicated locally. They design peer-facing initiatives and influence what is seen as relevant, safe and engaging within their community. This reflects higher-level participation, where young people actively shape delivery rather than being consulted after the fact. This is evident in the way young people lead visible community activities, develop messaging that resonates with their peers, and contribute to an ongoing shift in how mental health is spoken about across schools and the broader community.

The Partnership Group provides a formal mechanism for shared decision-making, bringing together schools, council, services and community organisations.

This ensures that implementation is grounded in local knowledge and lived realities, rather than externally imposed approaches. This model of shared governance supports authentic co-design in practice. Local partners shape how the model is implemented in response to workforce constraints, school schedules, safeguarding requirements and community priorities. That participation extends into evaluation. The Break O'Day evaluation, for instance, was designed to be participatory and utilisation-focused, ensuring that findings were fed back into ongoing delivery and used to strengthen implementation in real time (Grattidge et al., 2026).

Across independent evaluation findings, young people consistently report increased confidence to support peers, greater willingness to seek help, and a stronger sense of belonging and purpose through their involvement. These outcomes demonstrate that participation is meaningful, not symbolic (Robinson et al 2018; Ludowyk 2020; Neelakantan et al., 2025; Grattidge et al., 2026).

Live4Life is a prevention and early intervention model rather than a clinical service. As such, consumer participation is most prominent in leadership, design, governance and evaluation, rather than treatment planning. This reflects the scope of the model while still demonstrating strong alignment with higher-level participation principles.

4. Evidence of trauma-informed care, including an attentiveness and responsiveness to the impact of trauma within the service or program.

Live4Life operates as a trauma-informed, community-based model which recognises young people's mental health is shaped by relationships, environments and broader social conditions. The model avoids placing responsibility solely on the individual and instead builds supportive systems around young people.

A core trauma-informed principle within Live4Life is ensuring young people are not left to manage distress alone. The model emphasises help-seeking, connection to trusted adults, and clear referral pathways, reinforcing that support is shared and accessible.

Particular attention is given to ensuring that youth leadership roles are safe and appropriately bounded. Young people are supported to lead and contribute, but not expected to take on roles beyond their capacity, such as managing crisis situations. This includes strengthening guidance around role clarity, ensuring clear pathways for escalation, and aligning delivery with safeguarding and child safety requirements. These are critical elements of trauma-informed practice, particularly in rural communities where boundaries can be less defined (Grattidge et al., 2026).

The model is responsive to the realities of rural life, including isolation, stigma, limited service access and workforce shortages. Implementation requires adaptation to these conditions, reinforcing the importance of flexibility and local responsiveness in trauma-informed care.

Evidence from evaluations indicates that Live4Life contributes to increased openness in conversations about mental health, reduced stigma, and greater confidence to seek and offer help. These shifts contribute to safer, more supportive environments for young people (Robinson et al 2018; Ludowyk 2020; Neelakantan et al., 2025; Grattidge et al., 2026).

The Crew model supports empowerment, connection and purpose which are key protective factors that align strongly with trauma-informed principles of agency, belonging and relational safety (Neelakantan et al., 2025).

As a prevention and early intervention model, Live4Life is designed to equip young people and the adults in their lives to acknowledge and respond to signs of mental ill-health by seeking or offering help and appropriately escalating before a crisis occurs. However, sudden and unexpected deaths are a reality of any community and Live4Life has a detailed policy response for such occasions and proactively engages with communities in postvention preparedness planning. The Live4Life model is not equipped to provide a postvention service. But it has strong relationships with postvention response providers such as Be You, headspace Schools and Communities, Jesuits Support After Suicide, Thirrili and StandBy and can act as a conduit for Live4Life communities to engage with suitable experts. Live4Life supports these conversations, helps to identify if a local postvention protocol already exists, and provides guidance and connections where required.

In 2025, Live4Life engaged with four postvention responses across our communities. In some cases there was no impact on local delivery but we did help local community members with connections for young people impacted and service providers and, in one case, had close contact with the impacted school. Where a response did have an impact on local delivery, we paused activities and help-seeking details were shared across the community, while a local community response plan was activated. In one instance involving a past student, Live4Life communicated with the impacted rural school staff who were unaware.

Live4Life demonstrates trauma-informed care not only in its content, but in how it is implemented, through prioritising safety, trust, relationships, shared responsibility, and continuous learning and adaptation.

5. Evidence of Partnerships and Linkages with all key stakeholders (collaboration for continuity between organisations). This includes highlighting any commissioning partnerships that enabled effective and high quality delivery.

Live4Life is the only youth mental health prevention model designed specifically for rural and regional communities. Its place-based, whole-of-community approach builds and sustains collaborative relationships (often for the first time) among local government, schools, health services and community organisations in a local government area (LGA).

These partnerships are critical to the implementation of the model and constitute one of four key components upon which successful delivery depends. Every community establishes its own School and Community Partnership Group where senior community leaders from local secondary schools, community and health services, local government and other key stakeholders drive implementation of the model and provide local oversight. Across all the Live4Life communities in Victoria and Tasmania, 124 organisations are active members (eg numerous Shire Councils, Victoria Police, headspace, Brophy Family, Beyond the Bell, Wellways, Murray PHN, Latrobe Regional Health, Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, Western Victoria PHN, Ballarat and District Suicide Awareness Network etc).

Funding and engagement partnerships are critical to the success of Live4Life.

Live4Life is a Social Impact Partner of Future Generation Global (FGG) — one of just 14 high-impact non-profit organisations selected as part of this initiative which reinforces the importance of early intervention and transparent, data-driven approaches to prevent mental ill-health and improve wellbeing in young Australians.

In Tasmania, Live4Life is currently operating in the Break O'Day region, with plans for expansion into additional rural and regional areas of the state. Rather than Live4Life directly managing this expansion, we are collaborating with Relationships Australia Tasmania as our Engagement Partner. This partnership will support the rollout of the Live4Life model in new communities, leveraging the strength and local knowledge of established Tasmanian organisations to build sustainable, community-led mental health initiatives.

Partners and Pro-Bono supporters can be found on our website.

6. Verification and evaluation of the service/ program's effectiveness e.g., quality improvement activity, data collection and its use including graphs and tables, achievement of performance indicators, e.g., attendance figures, outcome measures, number of document downloads, page views, click through rates.

Impact measurement has been embedded in the Live4Life model from inception. Internal and independent monitoring and evaluation activities are conducted continuously alongside program delivery. A huge amount of quantitative and qualitative data has gone into building the evidential foundation of the Live4Life program.

One aspect of that data is raw numbers which measure reach. In 2025, 8,896 young people received evidence-based mental health education. The total number of young people living in rural and regional communities who have received evidence-based mental health education since the program began in 2010 is now 38,887.

In addition, 488 adults were trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid® in 2025, taking the total number of adults trained since Live4Life began to nearly 3,600. That means that for every 11 young people, there is at least one adult trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid® who is able to assist a young person in a time of need.

In 2025, 65 schools participated in Live4Life and 325 young people volunteered in the Crews. There were 124 Partner Organisations, 144 community-based Teen MHFA® Instructors and 24 Youth MHFA® Instructors.

Over time, the critical mass of Live4Life community members who have received mental health education influences broader community attitudes and behaviours relating to mental illness, creating sustainable and long-lasting generational change.

Live4Life is currently undertaking three evaluations of its impact:
1. A multi-year, multi-community study with the University of Melbourne involving five local government areas (Hepburn, Ballarat, South Gippsland, Baw Baw and Southern Grampians).

2. Participation with 13 other organisations as a Social Impact Partner of Future Generation Global (FGG) in an impact measurement framework until 2026.

3. Supported by funding from State Trustees Australia Foundation and William Buckland Foundation, we began trialling internal evaluation activities (student surveys) in 2024 as part of the standard program delivery of Latrobe Valley, Wellington, Macedon Ranges and Central Goldfields (with Benalla and Glenelg joining the evaluation activities in 2025). Survey results are reflected back to communities in aggregated and individualised reports, providing valuable data for program delivery, advocacy and building local support.

The long term impact of the program is important. In 2023-24, a research team from Melbourne University's Centre for Mental Health and Community Wellbeing conducted an evaluation of former Crew members over 18. Titled 'Catching Up With The Crew', the project explored how experiences of community connection, leadership and mental health shaped the developmental transition from secondary school to further education, employment etc. Key findings from the final report included:

- Crew participation enhanced interpersonal skills such as leadership, communication, public speaking, and empathy that alumni continued to use in their study, work, and friendships following secondary school.
- Participants reported maintenance of key Mental Health First Aid skills, including knowledge of mental health problems and a confidence to help others experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Crew alumni characterised the Live4Life model as unique in a context with high stigma around mental health challenges and limited mental health education.
- Crew membership often reinforced participants' commitment to mental health advocacy and education beyond school.

"One of the impacts of Live4Life's growth is that, in absolute terms, it results in more members of the community trained in MHFA, with its attendant benefits for improved knowledge and attitudes towards mental health challenges. Over time, this results in a new community of individuals, who are likely to hold fewer stigmatising attitudes towards mental health, and who are more likely to be skilled at responding to a person experiencing a mental health crisis."

Catching up with the Crew – Final Report

Thanks to the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Live4Life has launched a new e-learning hub, linked to Live4Life's CRM platform which enables seamless annual work plans/processes and real-time data input. The content and platform are flexible. Materials can be updated and refreshed as needed — meaning continuous improvement is built into the infrastructure. With clearly laid out learning modules and an interface customised to individual users, it's designed for onboarding new workers and maintaining a shared approach across diverse and geographically distant communities.

Communication with rural communities and stakeholders spread across a wide geographical area is crucial — both in reinforcing the core aims of the Live4Life model, and in providing cross-community support and validation of achievements and activities. Live4Life maintains a constant flow of information across a variety of platforms.

Conclusion (1/2 x A4 page)

Live4Life was first conceived and developed in the Macedon Ranges in 2010. It was a decisive and groundbreaking response to a reported increase in anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide amongst young people in the rural communities of the shire. It was an approach that genuinely centred young people themselves in a prevention strategy and, for the first time ever, brought a broad range of community organisations together to support them.

Live4Life's steady expansion to many more communities is testament to the profound need for locally-driven prevention programs. The positive outcomes of that courageous first step in 2010 have been thousands of young people and adults all equipped with the skills and knowledge to support themselves and one another. To understand the first signs of mental ill-health. To know what to do, how to help, who to go to.

Referees (1/2 x A4 page)

Lakshmi Neelakantan: Research Fellow, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health [redacted]

Ha Hoang: Acting Co-director, School of Health Sciences, UTAS Centre for Rural Health [redacted]

References

- Robinson, J., Thorn, P., Byrne, S., Bailey, E., & Kennedy, V. (2018). An evaluation of the implementation of the Live4Life community youth suicide prevention and mental health promotion model in two rural Victorian communities. Orygen.
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- Neelakantan, L., Logan, N., Raniti, M., Morgan, A., Lim, M. H., & Reavley, N. (2025). Baseline findings from a longitudinal co-evaluation of the Live4Life model. Mental Health & Prevention, 40, 200465. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2025.200465
- Grattidge, L., Hoang, H., Headlam, V., Lees, D., Jessup, B., & O'Neill, A. (2026). Break O'Day Live4Life Final Evaluation Report. UTAS.



What is Live4Life?

A place-based, prevention model that works.

Live4Life is the only youth mental health prevention program designed specifically for rural and regional communities. Live4Life's place-based, whole-of-community approach builds and sustains collaborative relationships (often for the first time) among local government, schools, health services and community organisations.

Through targeted education, local partnerships and youth leadership, Live4Life creates a supportive, community-wide response which:

- removes barriers that prevent young people from seeking help
- decreases mental health stigma
- increases awareness of local professional help
- improves the mental health knowledge of secondary school-aged students, school staff, parents, carers and community members
- builds community connectedness and resilience

Over time, the critical mass of Live4Life community members who have received mental health education influences broader community attitudes and behaviours relating to mental illness, creating sustainable and long-lasting generational change.

Who drives the program?

Live4Life is implemented by rural regional communities (LGAs) through Partnership Groups overseen by a Lead Agency (often the Council), and supported by the 22 staff of Youth Live4Life Ltd, a registered charity headquartered in Woodend, Victoria.

Communities typically employ a program Coordinator and Youth/Crew Support Worker. This ranges from single school communities like Hepburn to a regional city like Ballarat.

Youth Live4Life Ltd works with government, philanthropy, corporate partners and donors to enable its Community Engagement team to work collaboratively with communities and empower them to implement the Live4Life model successfully. Communications, Fundraising, Policy and Research staff support that core work.

What do people say about Live4Life?

- "Live4Life has made a huge difference in my life because it has made me overcome so many things like bullying, past trauma, suicidal thoughts, understanding of what I'm going through and many more things. The most important thing that I have learned while being a Crew member of Live4Life is no matter what you are going through, you're not alone and there are always people out there to help you."

  Southern Grampians Crew member (Year 9/10)

- "I've said it many times that Live4Life really, truly saved my life. And not just because it gave me the knowledge, but because it gave my friends the knowledge that they needed in order to recognise how bad things got for me during high school."

  Past Crew member, 'Catching up with the Crew' Research Paper

- ""Live4Life has proven that when young people are given the tools, the training and the trust, they can make a real difference in their own communities. In Benalla Rural City, the program has reduced stigma, encouraged help seeking behaviour and built a strong network of young leaders who are looking out for one another. The success of Live4Life in Benalla shows what is possible when there is sustained investment in community-led, place-based mental health support. Every young person deserves access to strong, early mental health support, regardless of their postcode. Live4Life is delivering real outcomes, and I want to see those benefits extended to more regional communities."

  State Member for Euroa Annabelle Cleeland, 15 January 2026, Yarrawonga Chronicle

- Live4Life Foundation video tells the story of the program's origin in the Macedon Ranges. **Watch here.**- https://vimeo.com/1098654636/



- Bridget Franc is Head of Wellbeing at Daylesford College, Live4Life Hepburn Coordinator, and a Teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor. In this video, she explains how the Live4Life program had a practical, significant impact in a young person's life. Watch Bridget's Story here: vimeo.com/1101443037



- Young people are at the heart of the Live4Life model and Live4Life elevates and amplifies the voices of young people in discussions about mental health. Hear the volunteers in the Crew speak in their own words here: vimeo.com/1080429465



Impact Stories

Life4Life impact story by Head of Student Wellbeing and member of the Ballarat Partnership Group, TeenMHFA Instructor & YouthMHFA Instructor

“In many ways, one of the big impacts of Live4Life in the Ballarat community was at least partly unintended. Bringing people together to form a partnership group could have seen a group come together without any real connection, but that is not what has happened. What has occurred is a real sense of connection and support amongst the different organisations that have committed to the project that has opened doorways and created long lasting connections and good will amongst very diverse settings.

The basis of this is that young people are young people and while they may have different lives at some levels, the challenges of being a young person are to some degree universal. Mental health in particular does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, money or educational attainment.

The basic idea of supporting those around us and being willing to intervene with care and support are the same basic principals for all young people. This has brought organisations and schools together because we all hold common ground in providing this support.

When we work collaboratively and provide support to each other as organisations, we model something really powerful for young people, that is that being a part of this community is something special. When we work in the service of young people to support them to care for themselves and their friends, we strengthen our community, the Ballarat community.

Live4Life is becoming a springboard for a range of other collaborative initiatives to occur to support the young people in our community. Ballarat is only a great place to live if it is a safe and supportive environment for all members of the community. Live4Life is taking huge steps to make this a reality and is bringing parts of the community together who have never really collaborated before. Born out of tragedy, it is building an exciting and positive future.”

Life4Life impact story by Baw Baw Teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor.

"As a Community Teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor I don’t have the privilege of having ongoing connections with the students and therefore usually don’t get to witness firsthand the impact the program is having.

However recently I was greatly encouraged by a chance conversation with the mother of a year 11 student. He had completed Teen Mental Health First Aid through the Live4Life program in 2024.

Unaware of my participation as an instructor she shared with me her son had been experiencing suicidal thoughts last year. The family and all his support networks were totally unaware of his mental health struggles at the time. The mother continued to share about her son’s journey and spoke very highly of the Live4Life program, in particular Teen Mental Health First Aid.

She believes it was here that her son gained insight into his mental ill health, became aware of the impact his depressive symptoms were having on his life and the importance of seeking help. It was through the student feedback form that the instructor was made aware the student had requested follow-up from the school wellbeing team.

It was such a special moment for both of us when I realized I was the instructor who had delivered the mental health first aid to her son's class. It was such a powerful confirmation and encouragement to me that I am reaching and connecting in a relatable way with our precious youth and how vital and worthwhile the Live4Life program is.

This young person is now completing year 11 and according to his mum has a caring and understanding friendship group who through the program have been equipped with skills to better understand mental health and support their friend."

Live4Life in the media 2025 Print / Online



HOME NATIONAL LOCAL POLITICS BUSINESS SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY HEALTH LIFE

Live4Life Baw Baw Celebrates Youth Mental Health Ambassadors

VIC | 29 Oct 2025 1:39 pm AEST

Share

Live4Life Baw Baw proudly hosted its annual end-of-year celebration this week in Drouin.

The celebration honoured the dedication and impact of its Ambassadors, known as the Crew.

The event brought together 35 young ambassadors from se education settings across the region. These students have their leadership, teamwork, and mental health literacy skill positive mental health within their schools and peer netwo

The celebration featured a vibrant three-part program, ind expo supported by local health and wellbeing services, a sh session — all designed to thank the Crew for their invaluab the year.

As the year draws to a close, Live4Life Baw Baw is also cele milestones over the last 12 months including:

MIDLAND EXPRESS

News

Prevention programs vital

"Support for youth mental health is urgently needed in Victorian rural and regional communities – and prevention programs are vital if we are going to make an impact."

That was the powerful message that award-winning youth mental health organisation Live4Life delivered at a special Parliament House breakfast last Thursday.

A range of speakers included host Legislative Assembly Speaker Maree Edwards, Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas, MPs, a range of organisations, funding bodies and representatives of Live4Life communities.

Live4Life CEO Bernard Galbally addressed the gathering with an assessment of what is now acknowledged as a growing problem worldwide.

"Despite local, state and national efforts, we are experiencing a youth mental health crisis," he said.

"The first thing we need to grasp is that we will never have enough clinicians, psychologists and social workers to meet demand.

"What we can do is give everyone in rural and regional communities the skills and knowledge to better support their own and others' mental health and wellbeing. That is how we save young lives – prevention."

The ABS National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing shows that the prevalence of mental ill-health in young people aged 16-24 years has increased by 50 per cent since 2007. In regional areas, the suicide rate is now more than 50 per cent higher than major cities.

The Live4Life program was established back in 2010 in the Macedon Ranges. The only model of its kind designed specifically for rural and regional communities, it has successfully led the way on providing a whole-of-community prevention approach that delivers real impact.

"The community approach tha takes means that my experience

Left to Right: Jordan Crugnale MP, former Live4Life crew Matilda Hasell, Minister fo Health Ingrid Stitt, Deputy CEO Live4Life Jeremy Wiggins, Minister for Health Mary-An and former Live4Life crew and current crew champion Laura Crozier.

NEWS

Small Town Sing raises $1230 for Live4Life Benalla

NEWS

Live4Life Benalla's success shows the power of youth-led mental health support

By Contributed

Jan 14, 2026

Hamilton Spectator

Pool mural shines light on mental health

Emma Humphries from WDHS, Balmbridge College students Zoe Priddle and Charlotte Turner, SGSC Youth Engagement Officer Jesse Shannahan, Live4Live co-ordinator Amy Lewis from WDHS, Mishka Cutchie from Hamilton Parklands School, Sammy Gribbin from Balmoral Community College and Hamilton Parklands students Nikiah Mattichaas, Archie Purcell and Christian O'Sullivan have been working hard to create the Live4Live mural at the Hamilton Outdoor Pool on Wednesday.

ge, FCJ College and the Australian Christian College celebrating the first aid training with Live4Life.

Annabelle Cleeland has called for youth-led mental health no more vulnerable communities, following the success

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Hamilton Spectator **'Pool mural shines light on mental health'** Published 7 December 2025 link
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North Eastern Advertiser **'Strokes For Suicide Prevention'** Published 2 October
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Warragul & Drouin Gazette, **'Live4Life given five year surety'** Published 10 June 2025 link
North-Eastern Advertiser **'Inspiring Healthy Minds'** Published 4 June 2025 link (p.6)
Wellington Shire **'Wellington gears up for Live4Life Launch Day 2025'** published 23 May 2025 link
RACV '**Youth Live4Life reaches over 2,400 students with mental health program in Ballarat'** published 15 May 2025 link
City of Ballarat **'Ballarat's newest mental health leaders inducted as part of Live4Life rollout'** published 6 May, 2025 link
Mt Gambier Times **'Mental health leadership program kicks off'** Published 2 July 2025 link
AFR Weekend print '**Inside Australia's $11B charity hoard'** Published 13 July 2025
AFR Weekend '**The wealthy families keeping their private foundations private'** Published 13 July 2025 link
Riverine Herald **'The Lockie Project – Raising important funds for youth mental health'** Published 4 July 2025 link
Mt Gambier Times **'Mental health leadership program kicks off'** Published 2 July 2025 link
Warragul & Drouin Gazette, **'Live4Life program launched'**, published 29 April 2025 link
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Byron Healing Website, **'Prevention is the key to mental health crisis'**, published 16 April 2025 link
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ABC News Online, **'Live4Life program helping teens to deal with mental health issues'**, published 9 April, 2025 link
Marbourough Times **'Live4Life launch latest crew'**, published 8 April, 2025 link
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Mirage News **'Local Youths Launch Live4Life For 2025'** published 1 Apr 2025 link

Impact

175+	40,000+	3,331	1,800	147
Local organisations have actively partnered to deliver Live4Life	Secondary students have received mental health education	Adults have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid®	Year 9 & 10 have volunteered in the Live4Life 'Crew'	Community-based trained MHFA® Instructors

"The Live4Life case study illustrates an example of a local organisation driving change in young people's lives."
Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System - Final Report

What is the Live4Life model?

Made up of four components, the Live4Life model:

1. **Creates effective partnerships** between schools, community organisations, health services, local government and other key stakeholders to drive implementation of the model and provide local oversight
2. **Delivers evidence-based mental health education** to young people in Years 8 and 10/11, as well as to adults in the wider community
3. **Trains young leaders in Years 9 and 10** as Mental Health Ambassadors in the Live4Life 'Crew'
4. **Provides mentoring and support** to ensure communities have the assistance, resources, structures and expertise to implement the model

A wrap-around model with young people at the centre



Why is Live4Life needed?

Suicide is the leading cause of death among young Australians aged 15-24 years.

Mental ill-health now accounts for at least 45% of the overall burden of disease in those aged 10–24 years. Over 75% of mental health issues occur before the age of 25 and the annual prevalence of mental ill health in young people aged 16–24 years has increased by more than 50% in the last 15 years.

These issues are particularly acute in rural and regional communities, where the suicide rate is now more than 50% higher than in metro areas, and anxiety, depression and self harm are 30% higher. According to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, 63% of young people living in rural and regional communities cannot access a mental health service when in need. That figure was based on 2019 data, pre-covid. The figure is higher now.

We will never have enough rural-and-regionally-based clinicians, psychologists, social workers etc to meet demand in rural and regional Australia. What we can do is upskill everyone in non-metropolitan communities to better support their own and others' mental health and wellbeing. The Live4Life model does just that and is working.

Where does Live4Life fit within the broader mental health continuum?

Live4Life is a necessary component of the broader mental health system because it provides foundational prevention and early education that empowers young people and communities to recognise and address mental health issues before they escalate, helping to avoid worsening conditions, reduce increasing waitlists for costly tertiary services, and lessen overall demand on the system.

TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
Prevention, Mental Health Promotion & Education • **Live4Life whole-of-community model** (rural & regional schools / health services / Mental Health First Aid training for young people & adults / peer and youth-led mental health promotion) • School-based programs (eg MindMatters, Be You, Respectful Relationships) • Mental health education campaigns (eg R U OK Day) • Youth MHFA courses • Bullying prevention initiatives (eg Bully Zero, Project Rockit)	**Self-help, Early Intervention & Community Support** • Kids Helpline, Lifeline, Suicide Call Back Service • ReachOut.com • Beyond Blue online tools • eheadspace • Butterfly Foundation online support • Smiling Mind app • headspace centres • Community health centres • Youth-friendly GPs • School counsellors / wellbeing officers / mental health practitioners and GPs in schools (where available) • Psychologists (Better Access scheme)	**Crisis Support & Specialist Clinical Care** • Orygen Youth Mental Health • CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Public psychiatric hospitals (eg Royal Children's Hospital, Latrobe Regional Hospital) • Private psychiatrists • Orygen Specialist Programs • Sub-acute residential services (eg PARCs)

NB This list of programs and services is not exhaustive. Its purpose is to illustrate the gaps Live4Life fills within the youth mental health sector in rural and regional areas, where services are often limited.

Live4Life is a Suicide Prevention Australia Accredited Program.

Alignment with state and federal strategies

Live4Life is aligned with state and federal health, mental health, and suicide prevention strategies. It exemplifies place-based, community-led innovation in youth mental health and suicide prevention articulated in the **National Suicide Prevention Strategy** and **National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**. Live4Life is highlighted as a case study in the **Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System** final report. It is included in the **Victorian Suicide Prevention and Response Implementation Plan (2024-2026)**. The **National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program** has funded the trial and evaluation of Live4Life in rural Tasmania.

Awards

- **Winner**, 'Community Partnerships', City of Ballarat and Live4life, LG Pro Awards for Excellence 2025
- **Finalist**, Victorian 7News Young Achiever Awards, The Victorian Government Group Achievement in the Community Award 2025
- **Finalist**, Victorian 7News Young Achiever Awards, Awards Australia Foundation Connecting Communities 2025
- **Finalist**, Tasmanian Young Achiever Awards – Break O'Day Crew 2025
- **Winner**, Medallion, Baw Baw Shire Council Australia Day awards – Baw Baw Crew member Mia 2025
- **Winner**, Young Citizen of the Year, Central Goldfields Shire Council Australia Day Awards – Central Goldfields Crew member Ella 2025
- **Winner**, Community Award of the Year, Central Goldfields Shire Council Australia Day Awards – Live4Life Central Goldfields 2025
- **Winner**, Suicide Prevention Australia's National LiFE Award for Communities in Action 2024
- **Finalist**, 7News Young Achiever Awards, Spirit Super Connecting Communities, 2024
- **Finalist**, Victorian Community Achievement Awards, Mental Health and Wellbeing Award, 2023
- **Winner**, Christine Cox Trailblazer Award, Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network Awards, 2023
- **Winner**, Australia Day Awards, Live4Live Benalla Crew, Community Group of the Year, 2023
- **Winner**, Australia Day Awards, Live4Life Southern Grampians Crew, Young Citizens of the Year, 2023
- **Finalist**, 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards, Community Group, 2023
- **Highly Commended**, LG Pro Awards, 2020
- **Winner**, YACVic Rural Youth Award for Most Innovative Youth Project or Program in Rural or Regional Victoria, 2018
- **Winner**, VicHealth Award for Improving Mental Wellbeing, 2018