
MEDIA RELEASE – November 2024

Lifeline Connect
Free, face-to-face support for the Community

The integration of Lifeline Connect in the local community represents an evolution in delivering Lifeline's crisis support services.

Lifeline Connect is a new service model, successfully embedded in Hornsby, Chatswood and North Sydney. Leveraging the proven impact of Lifeline's 13 11 14 crisis support model, Lifeline Connect provides early intervention and support in a face-to-face mode.

In a context where wait-times and cost present additional barriers for people to access support, Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney offers support in its Connect Hubs which is accessible, free and allows for anonymity.

Staffed by accredited Crisis Supporters, the Connect Hubs offer free, confidential, accessible face-to-face, support for those individuals who are struggling in the community. In a discreet, safe space, Lifeline listens in a non-judgemental and caring way.

As well as point-in-time support, the Lifeline Connect model provides warm referrals and local service integration, matched to a person's specific needs for ongoing support.

With each Connect Hub, Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney has established a network of relationships with health and psycho-social organisations with the aim of 'joining the dots' thereby assisting the public in better navigating the complexities of accessing help, reducing likelihood of ending up in ED or being turned away from services for not meeting eligibility criteria.

The physical model offers many benefits, including:

- A localised approach co-designed in partnership with communities, health and local providers
- Face-to-face crisis support services provided by trained staff
- A gateway to suicide prevention, social and mental health services
- Increased accessibility and community connections to reduce avoidable hospital admissions

No problem is too big or too small. Whether individuals are experiencing family or relationship issues, financial stress, or just need someone to talk to, Lifeline Connect is here for the community. Individuals do not need a referral or appointment— they are able to walk in and speak to a trained Lifeline supporter who is ready to listen, without judgment, in a caring and supportive environment.

Lifeline Connects' "no wrong door" policy ensures that if additional help is needed, they will connect individuals to the right local services and programs. For example, referrals have been made to health providers as well as social groups, volunteer organisations, exercise activities, and clinical services. To date Lifeline Connect have made referrals into over 80 organisations across Sydney's North and beyond.

During the first 13 months of delivery, 39% of individuals were born overseas, with the primary cultural group accessing support being the Chinese community. The Connect service actively works to attract bi-lingual Lifeline supporters, in addition to partnering with other organisations such as Chinese Australian Society Services (CASS) to provide in-language support.

From all people presenting to Connect since its inception, the primary reasons for engaging in support include mental health, loneliness and relationships. 58% of individuals seeking help have been aged between 26–54 years, the age group at highest risk of suicide. The Connect model has to date seen an equal split between males and females accessing support.

Lifeline Connect is open in the Chatswood Library, every Monday from 12–3pm, North Sydney's Stanton Library every Tuesday from 3pm–7pm, and the Hornsby Library every Thursday from 1pm–5:30pm.

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Lifeline provides 24-hour
crisis support via *phone*
on **13 11 14**, *webchat* at
www.lifeline.org.au
and via *text message* on
0477 13 11 14.