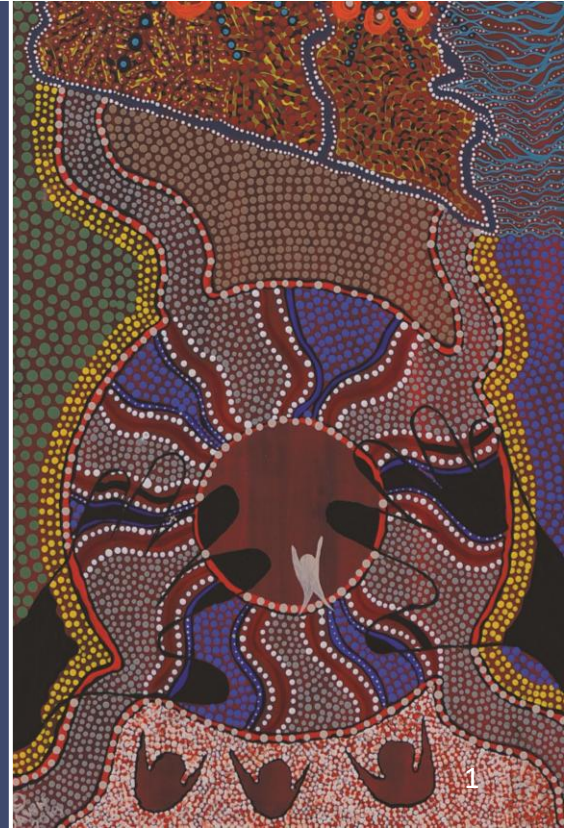




# Low Intensity Mental Health Services Industry Briefing

COORDINARE - South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network  
Tuesday 21 April 2026





COORDINARE - South Eastern NSW PHN acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands across which we live and work.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection - both physical and spiritual - to land, sea and sky.



# Who are we and who do we work with?



- We are one of the 31 Primary Health Network (PHNs) established throughout Australia.
- We work directly with GPs, other primary care providers, secondary care providers, and hospitals to bring improved outcomes for patients.
- We aim to address local health needs, as well as national health priorities, particularly in Aboriginal health, alcohol and other drugs, mental health and suicide prevention, chronic diseases, after-hours services, healthy ageing and end of life care.
- Commissioning is central to COORDINARE's ability to achieve these objectives and address local and national priorities.

# COORDINARE – South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network (SENSW PHN)



## Population

648,806 total population 21.5% aged over 65 years

> 33,180 (5.2%) people identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Our region is home to 3.4% of Australia's Aboriginal population, and 9.8% of the total Aboriginal population in NSW

62,349 (9.7%) culturally and linguistically diverse people

Top 3 non-English speaking countries of birth  
 1. India  
 2. North Macedonia  
 3. Italy



10.4% non-English speaking at home

Top 3 non-English languages spoken at home  
 1. Macedonian  
 2. Italian  
 3. Arabic

12.3% projected population growth between 2020-2030

Local government areas (LGAs and territories)	Population
1 Wollongong	216,431
2 Shellharbour	78,332
3 Kiama	22,964
4 Shoalhaven	109,611
5 Jervis Bay	311
6 Eurobodalla	40,755
7 Bega Valley	35,988
8 Snowy Monaro	21,823
9 Queanbeyan-Palerang	64,233
10 Cootburn Mulwaree	32,428
11 Yass Valley	17,379
12 Upper Lachlan Shire	8,551

## Health and related services

769 GPs  
 406 practice nurses

2 Local Health Districts (LHDs)

199 general practices

80 residential aged care facilities

22 public hospitals  
 16 emergency departments  
 30 community health centres



# Background



COORDINARE receives funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) to commission low intensity mental health services to support people with, or at risk of, mild mental illness as part of a stepped care approach.

The Australian Government's 2024–25 Budget announced a new National Early Intervention Service to provide support to people at risk of, or experiencing, mild mental ill health or transient distress. This national approach now known as Medicare Mental Health Check-in commenced on 1 January 2026.

This resulted in a reduction to COORDINARE's Funding from 2026-27. In addition, the Commonwealth directed PHNs to review existing low intensity mental health services to assess future needs of low intensity services in the region.

# Findings from Low Intensity Review



Barriers to engaging with digital or telehealth-only services



Challenges with service navigation and early help-seeking



Limited low intensity options for some age groups and communities



Access issues related to geography, transport, language, and cultural safety

*Stakeholders emphasised the need for community based, culturally tailored models that better meet the needs of priority populations and will complement the national Medicare Mental Health Check in service.*

# Purpose of funding



- Identify a provider/providers to deliver primarily face-to-face, evidence-based low intensity mental health services
- Improve access for people who face barriers to engaging with mainstream low intensity service option
- Support structured, evidence-based, and locally responsive service delivery
- Improve equity of access and outcomes for priority population groups



# Who can apply and target populations



## Who can apply

- Organisations operating within the South Eastern NSW PHN catchment
- Organisations with a strong community presence/connection to target population
- Experience delivering health, mental health, or related supports

## Target populations

- Children aged 5–12 and their families
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- Older people aged 65+

Note: While these three groups are the primary focus for this initiative, COORDINARE recognises that other population groups experience significant barriers to accessing low intensity and early intervention supports. Accordingly, strong, well justified proposals targeting other underserved populations will also be considered.

# Scope of Funding



Funded activities must:

- Deliver low intensity mental health interventions
- Be evidence-based and structured
- Support people experiencing or at risk of mild mental ill-health
- Complement, and not duplicate, existing services

Activities that are not evidence-based, are primarily social or lifestyle-focused, or duplicate existing programs are out of scope.

# Available Funding



Total funding available for initiative: \$1,095,812 (ex GST)

- \$547,906 for FY 2026/27
- \$547,906 for FY 2027/28

COORDINARE intends to commission services that collectively provide coverage across all three target population groups identified in this RFP, Applicants may propose a program for one, two, or all three groups (plus others); however, COORDINARE will seek to allocate funding equitably, which may influence the final distribution of funds.

# RFP responses



- Complete all sections of the RFP application form in Tenderlink
- Read each criterion carefully specified in Application Form and respond to all components.
- Complete the budget template to indicate the total value being applied for, and proposed expenditure.
- An Assessment Panel will consider each submission.
- Word limits apply to your responses and are outlined in the Application Form.
- Applicants should **not** wait until the nominated closing time to lodge their response(s), to avoid potential difficulties lodging their response with TenderLink.

**Proposals must be lodged before 8 May 2026, 5pm**

# Evaluation Criteria



25%

## Experience/ability to deliver services to priority group/s

Priority population focus and understanding of needs

Experience with proposed groups

Evidence-based delivery



30%

## Proposed Initiative

Proposed service approach  
Addressing unmet needs

Co-design approach  
Workforce and locations

Integration with services



25%

## Governance and Implementation

Governance and accountability

Clinical and information systems

Operational capacity  
Implementation readiness  
Risk management



10%

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Outcomes monitoring

Consumer feedback  
Data collection and reporting

Continuous improvement  
Sustainability approach



10%

## Funding Expenditure

Budget completeness  
Value for money  
Cost justification  
Funding alignment

# Timeline



Activity	Date
<b>Release date</b>	02 April 2026
<b>Closing date and time</b> <i>late applications will not be accepted</i>	08 May 2026 by 5:00pm (AEST)
<b>Shortlisting</b>	May 2026
<b>Clarification / negotiation</b>	May/June 2026
<b>Funding awarded</b>	June 2026
<b>Contracts start</b>	July 2026



**phn**  
SOUTH EASTERN NSW

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An Australian Government Initiative