

6.2 YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Submitting Councillors: Paul Klisaris and Rebecca Paterson

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes that limited access to youth mental health services now exist in Monash through the establishment of an interim and very part-time Youth Mental Health hub in partnership with the local agencies for young Monash people.*
- 2. Acknowledges the longstanding and ongoing campaign by the City of Monash and the young people of Monash to establish a permanent hub for youth mental health in Monash via a federally funded headspace facility which has been unsuccessful to this point.*
- 3. Seeks a meeting with the Member for Chisolm, Julia Banks MP for a delegation of young people accompanied by the Mayor, Cr Paul Klisaris and Cr Rebecca Paterson to progress discussions on the importance of headspace for Monash.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of our joint motion is to seek our colleagues support to further advocate to the Federal Government for funding to establish a dedicated mental health service for our young people. Our advocacy to the Commonwealth for *headspace* funding with and on behalf of the young people in our city is ongoing. Officers and their agency colleagues are now providing services to young people in Monash in a very limited way through a collaborative collocation of services as an alternative to a *headspace* program. We propose a delegation to Julia Banks MP member for Chisolm to encourage her to support *headspace* for Monash.

BACKGROUND

For a number of years Council has strongly advocated for the allocation of a *headspace* service to be located in Monash. As previously advised in a report to the 27 March 2018 Council meeting, we have continued this advocacy and met with the Minister for Health and Ageing's Mental Health Adviser, Dr Michael Gardner, in Canberra to highlight our case first-hand. We have also met with Julia Banks MP to seek her support for a *headspace* in Monash and asked her to advocate for and on behalf of the local needs of young people in her constituency. To date, despite our combined efforts, our young people continue to be without the full time mental health services they require.

DISCUSSION

The City of Monash now has an interim Youth Mental Health Hub, offering a limited combination of services that a *headspace* centre would normally provide on an out posting basis. At present the model is only operating for two days a week. This approach relies on third party services, two of which have not been able to provide staff to date and a third is unfortunately having their funding cease in October 2018 therefore they will not be taking on any new clients as of 31 August. This situation is disappointing and is not an ideal situation for our young people.

Our youth need more. In January 2018 the Federal Government announced an additional \$100 million for mental health services and \$30 million of this went to additional *headspace* services, but again Monash was unfortunately overlooked.

Furthermore, we do not support an *ehespace* as noted by Julia Banks MP in the Federal Parliament in May this year. Whilst Ms Banks proposed *ehespace* as a viable model for the young people of Monash, we believe this service falls far short of the service requirements needed for all youth, including those in Monash.

A number of efficacy studies (Griffiths et al 2012; Kaur et al 2014; Barry et al 2013) show that online support is useful as an adjunct to therapy, as an opportunity for information sharing or as a health promotion option.

There is limited evidence to support online therapeutic intervention and it is not a replacement for the face to face service support of a *headspace* program. There are a number of online services already available to the community – Lifeline, Kids Helpline and Beyond Blue. But they do not have such a range of free and accessible options when it comes to face to face support. We are determined to provide our young people the very best support available. This is an issue that we are both very passionate about and we hope that this will lead to the provision of this vital service in Monash.

CONCLUSION

Our *headspace for Monash* advocacy campaign will and must continue to ensure that our young people have access to the services they need, to support them to become resilient, capable and positive contributors to their communities. In the meantime, we urge our fellow Councillors to actively support our advocacy to government to provide sufficient funds to support our young people and their mental health needs. We are also seeking to arrange a delegation of young people to visit Julia Banks MP at her Burwood office. We also call on our community to join us and support our campaign by ensuring that decision makers are clearly aware of the needs of our young people.