



Lifeline Connect

Edition 7

As we welcome a new year at Lifeline Mid Coast, we're placing wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

Supporting our community starts with supporting one another. By prioritising our own wellbeing and strengthening the connections between us, we build a stronger, more sustainable Lifeline - one that can continue to offer hope, compassion and support to those who need it most.

Thank you for being part of this important journey with us.

CEO & Board Corner



Catherine Vaara
CEO



Neville Parsons
Board Chair

As we move into a new quarter, our focus across Lifeline Mid Coast is centred on wellbeing and connection - for our volunteers, staff, and the communities we support every day.

This period reflects both growth and renewal. We are pleased to welcome new Board Members and Crisis Support staff, strengthening the experience, diversity, and dedication that guide our organisation forward. At the same time, we acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to our journey, including a heartfelt farewell to Alexis for her valued work and commitment.

Our teams continue to expand opportunities for connection and support. From the rollout of our Staff Wellness Calendar to professional development for our Crisis Supporters, we remain committed to building a culture that prioritises wellbeing at every level.

We are also seeing important developments across our services. The Toward Recovery rebrand and release of updated brochures will help us better communicate and connect people with the support they need. Our suicide prevention programs continue to provide meaningful pathways to recovery and the pilot program Bloom is showing great results.

Community connection remains at the heart of what we do. Over the past months, Lifeline Mid Coast has been present at a range of events including Harmony Week, World Happiness Day, local expos, and community initiatives. These moments allow us to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and remind people that support is always within reach.

Our retail shops and volunteers continue to play a vital role in sustaining our services. Through initiatives like Rosterfy, volunteer recruitment campaigns, and upcoming opportunities, we are making it easier for people to get involved and make a difference.

As always, we are grateful for the dedication of our volunteers, staff, and supporters. Your contribution ensures that no one in our community must face their toughest moments alone. Together, we continue to strengthen connection, support wellbeing, and build a more compassionate community.

Board Members in Focus

We're excited to welcome not one, but two new voices to the Lifeline Mid Coast Board

Blayne West



With over 22 years of experience in local government, Blayne brings a genuine passion for people and community.

Throughout her career, Blayne has focused on building strong teams, supporting staff wellbeing, and delivering projects that make a real difference. Most recently, Blayne played a key role in leading emergency response and recovery efforts during the 2025 floods in the Port Macquarie Hastings region - working alongside multiple agencies to support the community through a challenging time. Blayne's known for her collaborative leadership style, focused on *"empowering people and building teams where individuals feel valued, supported, and motivated to achieve"*, and her ability to bring people together. Blayne's experience spans strategic planning, infrastructure, and environmental outcomes, but at the heart of it all is a commitment to strengthening communities and helping people thrive.

Heather Norton



With decades of experience in education, including leadership roles as Principal at both Firbank Grammar School and The Scots School Albury.

Heather has dedicated her career to supporting young people and building strong, compassionate school communities. Her work has consistently focused on wellbeing, leadership, and helping others thrive. Heather has also made a significant contribution to the wider community through her involvement with Rotary and leadership roles with organisations such as Headspace Port Macquarie, supporting mental health awareness and connection. Alongside her professional experience, Heather brings valuable lived experience supporting loved ones through mental health challenges, as well as personal insight into living with a disability. As Heather reflects, *"it has given me a rare insight into the challenges of living with a disability, but more importantly, the joy of participation."* Heather joins the Lifeline Mid Coast Board with a thoughtful, empathetic perspective and a strong commitment to strengthening support for those in need.

Wellness & Connection Hub

This year, we're doing things a little differently, with a stronger focus on wellbeing and connection in the office.

Sam has launched the **Wellness & Connection Hub**, an initiative designed to bring our Head Office Collective together through monthly wellbeing themes, optional challenges and shared activities. It's all about creating space for connection, encouraging healthy habits and adding small, meaningful moments into our workdays. Here's a snapshot of what we've been up to so far.

February Hydration

- Kicked things off with our very first Wellness & Connection Hub month
- Focused on staying hydrated (because water = energy, focus and better moods)
- Gentle reminders to refill, sip and keep those water bottles close
- A great tie-in with FebFast for anyone looking to reset and feel good
- Competed in a "water tasting" challenge, finding out who the hydration expert is in our office



March Moments & Memories

- Celebrated the big and small moments that help us feel connected
- Reflected on summer memories, adventures and the joy they brought
- Encouraged mindful pauses during the workday to reset and recharge
- Took part in the "5 Moments" Challenge, slowing down and noticing what matters
- Stepped outside together for the Endeavour Wellness Walk in support of mental wellbeing
- Shared personal favourites through Music Memoirs, connecting through songs and stories



World Happiness Day



World Happiness Day, held on March 20, was established by the United Nations to recognise the importance of wellbeing, connection, and quality of life around the world.

It's not about forcing happiness or feeling positive all the time, but about noticing the small, meaningful moments that are often overlooked. Taking time to connect, reflect, or simply pause can support our wellbeing in everyday ways.

At Lifeline Mid Coast, the team embraced the idea that happiness can grow through these everyday moments, recognising the value of connection, kindness, and taking time to support ourselves and each other.

Harmony Week

Harmony Week reminds us that everyone deserves to feel they belong.

Connection can be simple - a conversation, a smile, or taking a moment to check in with someone.

These small actions help people feel seen, supported, and less alone. At Lifeline Mid Coast, staff brought this message to life through shared experiences. Our "Share a Phrase" board celebrated the diversity of our team, with words and translations encouraging connection and learning across cultures, and staff used these phrases in everyday conversations.

We also marked the week with a "Wear Orange Day," promoting inclusiveness, unity, and a sense that everyone is welcome, respected, and valued.

Endeavour Wellness Walk

Lifeline Mid Coast was proud to attend the Endeavour Wellness Walk 2026, an annual event held around World Happiness Day that brings the community together in support of wellbeing and connection. The day began at Lady Nelson Wharf, where the Endeavour community shared a song developed through music therapy, reflecting what mental health means to them individually. This heartfelt performance was warmly received, with the crowd joining in and creating a strong sense of unity.

We then walked together along the breakwall, with music playing and even dolphins appearing alongside us, adding to the shared experience. Back at the wharf, a sausage sizzle and creative activities provided opportunities to connect, reflect, and build meaningful relationships across services.



One Ten Enterprise

Resilience in Action

With changes to collections through OneTen Enterprises, our shops have needed to adapt quickly.

Due to significant increases in global shipping and fuel costs, One Ten has had to pause collections, with their warehouses currently at capacity - and the response from our teams has been inspiring.

We'd like to give a heartfelt thank you to our incredible shop managers, who have been navigating recent challenges with creativity, flexibility, and a real sense of teamwork.

Across the region, managers and teams have been finding new ways to keep stock moving and customers engaged. Initiatives like fill-a-bag sales at our Central Road and Wingham shops have already proven to be a great success, helping to cycle through stock while offering fantastic value to our community. Wingham has also brought energy into the season with a \$2 Summer Sale, creating a fun and accessible way for shoppers to get involved and support the cause.

These ideas are a reflection of the passion and innovation within our teams. By continuing to work together and share ideas, we're confident our shops will remain strong - and that our community will continue to show the incredible support we see every day. We'll also continue to share updates and new ideas across our social channels, so keep an eye out and stay connected.



How it works



REUSE

**HEAD OFFICE—
SYDNEY**

**WE COLLECT PRE-LOVED
CLOTHING ACROSS NSW
AND SORT IT AT OUR
SYDNEY
HEADQUARTERS.
ITEMS ARE BALED AND
SENT TO OUR UAE
SORTING FACILITIES.**



BEFORE

**SORTING
WAREHOUSES—
UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES**

**OUR TEAMS INSPECT
AND SORT DONATIONS
BEFORE EXPORT.
ITEMS ARE REPAIRED,
CLEANED, UPCYCLED, OR
PREPARED FOR ROUTE IN
SAFE, FAIR CONDITIONS.**



RECYCLING

**DISTRIBUTION
WAREHOUSES—
WHERE MOST
NEEDED**

**CLOTHING IS SENT TO
COMMUNITIES WHERE
AFFORDABLE, QUALITY
ITEMS ARE IN DEMAND.
UNSOLD ITEMS
SUPPORT CHARITIES
AND PEOPLE IN NEED.**

Our partnership with OneTen Enterprises helps ensure that items we can't sell in-store don't go to landfill.

Instead, they're sorted, repaired or upcycled where possible, and sent on to communities where they're truly needed - reducing waste while extending the life and impact of every donation.

It's a meaningful way to honour the generosity of our donors, ensuring their contributions continue to make a difference beyond our local community.

CELEBRATING MOMENTS ACROSS ALL STORES!



Port Macquarie

Port Macquarie has been showcasing the quality of their donations, highlighting standout and high-value pieces that stop people mid-scroll. Combined with strong promos like the “fill a bag” concept, they’re creating a shopping experience that feels both exciting and seriously good value.



Forster

Forster brought St Patrick’s Day to life with creative displays and playful touches, filling the store with a fun, feel-good energy. It’s not the first - or last - time they’ve gone above and beyond, with their window displays a standout for every celebration. It’s a great reminder of how these special moments can brighten the day for both volunteers and shoppers alike.



Wauchope

Wauchope brought the Easter energy with a buzzing in-store raffle that had the community getting involved and coming back for more. It created a real sense of excitement on the shop floor, showing how a simple, well-run activation can turn a regular visit into something a little more special.



Kempsey

Kempsey has been creating a welcoming, family-friendly vibe with their colouring-in competition while also settling into their new space. As the team finds their rhythm, it’s been great to see confidence building on the shop floor, with early sales and engagement setting a strong foundation for what’s to come.



Wingham

Wingham’s socials have been full of personality - spotlighting everything from adorable pug features to awesome collectibles and the most random hidden treasures. Whether it’s a laugh about an “absurd number of bras”, a unique find or even “product testing”, their content captures the charm of thrifting at its best.

Crisis Support

From Interest to Impact

In February, we welcomed a wonderful group of community members to our Information Night - each person curious about how they could make a difference through Lifeline Mid Coast. Since then, that interest has grown into something truly meaningful. Our latest Crisis Support training group has now completed their program, with many participants currently undertaking their final assessments.

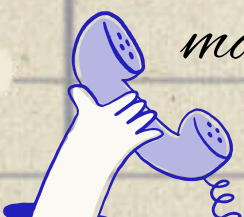
We're proud to share that 11 volunteers have already successfully completed their training, reaching this important milestone with dedication and care. These 11 new Crisis Support Volunteers will soon begin taking calls, stepping into a vital role - sitting with those who need it most and offering connection in moments that matter. Their contribution also helps strengthen our ability to keep the phones open 24/7, ensuring more people across the country feel heard and have somewhere to turn, at any time.

As they transition onto the phones, they'll be supported through supervised shifts, building confidence while being guided by experienced team members. Throughout their training, they've developed the skills to listen with empathy, without judgement, and to provide support when it's needed most. We're incredibly grateful to each of them for choosing to give their time in this way. Their compassion and commitment will make a real difference in the lives of others.



"It's beautiful to have someone to talk to and make connection with when you're on your own"

- Helpseeker



Crisis Support

Welcome Karen & Dorothy

We're so pleased to welcome Karen and Dorothy to the Crisis Support team. Both bring a wealth of experience as volunteer Telephone Crisis Supporters, and we're excited to see them step into this new opportunity. Their understanding of the role brings real insight and care to the work they're doing. They've already settled into the rhythm of the office (and the everyday antics!), and we're so glad to have them as part of the team.



Karen Fraser

Dorothy Smart

Farewell Alexis

After 10 years with Lifeline, including 8 years with us here in the office, we're not saying goodbye to Alexis - just "see you soon."

Alexis has brought so much care, style, and warmth to our team. Her Bridgerton-inspired farewell and beautiful high tea were the perfect reflection - thoughtful and full of heart. We'll miss you in the office, and your flair for setting the fashion standard, but we can't wait to see the style and energy you'll bring to our shops.

Thank you for everything, Lexie.
Farewell for now, and see you soon



Services Updates

Brochure Refresh

Something new is on the way! We're excited to be refreshing our service brochures to make it easier for people to find the support that's right for them.

These new one-page designs are clear, simple, and accessible, with cohesive, on-brand styling and soft, welcoming colours that feel more approachable. Each brochure outlines what the service offers and how to get in touch. We hope these updates help our community feel confident reaching out.

Coming soon across our channels and in the community!



First look at our new services logos



ECLIPSE



**TOWARD
RECOVERY**



**SUPPORT
AFTER SUICIDE**

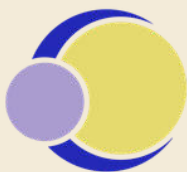


BLOOM



**FRIDAY
WELL-BEING**

Welcome Toward Recovery



**TOWARD
RECOVERY**

We're proud to share the rebrand of our Hospital2Recovery program, now known as **Toward Recovery** - a name that reflects the ongoing journey of healing and support.

Removing the clinical feel creates a more inclusive pathway for participants, beyond hospital referral, and reflects our commitment to walking alongside people with compassion, meeting them where they are.

Toward Recovery continues to support people who have experienced a suicide attempt, are living with suicidal thoughts, or navigating self-harm - providing practical support, advocacy, and connection every step of the way.

Services

Coffs Harbour Suicide Bereavement Facilitator Training



We're proud to celebrate the impact of Kelly's recent delivery of Suicide Bereavement Group Facilitator Training with Lifeline North Coast.

Six facilitators have now completed the program, strengthening the support available to people bereaved by suicide within their local community.

This work is about more than training - it's about building confidence, capability, and care in communities so that no one has to navigate suicide bereavement alone. Thanks to Kelly's guidance, knowledge, and thoughtful approach, we can feel reassured that these facilitators are well prepared to provide safe, compassionate, and meaningful support.

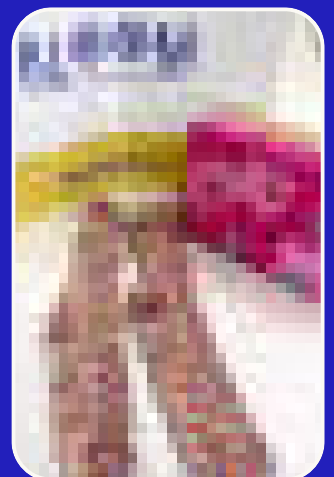
Participants spoke highly of the engaging and supportive learning environment, the practical tools shared, and the powerful inclusion of lived experience. Kelly's ability to create a space for open conversation and reflection was a key part of the training's success.

It's something to be truly proud of - seeing more trained facilitators across our wider communities, and knowing that because of this work, more people will have access to understanding and support when they need it most.

Support Toolbox

Throughout the BLOOM program, participants are invited to create a personal "toolbox" - a collection of strategies and items that can help during difficult moments. The toolbox is designed to support safer alternatives when someone may be experiencing thoughts of suicide or urges to self-harm.

Each toolbox is as unique as the person creating it. It reflects what brings comfort, distraction, or a sense of calm in challenging times. Some toolboxes might include fidget items for grounding, sour lollies to help shift focus, creative materials like art or craft supplies, meaningful photos, or a personalised safety plan. Over time, this toolbox becomes a practical and reassuring resource - something participants can return to when they need support, helping them navigate moments of distress with care and intention.



Opportunities

One Hat, Many Roles

Being part of our Lifeline Mid Coast community means you're already making a difference - and often, one hat can lead to many roles. If you've got a little extra time or you're curious about getting involved in a new way, there are plenty of options to explore.

Retail Volunteering · Telephone Crisis Support · Event Support

If something sparks your interest, have a chat with your manager or reach out to the office - your next step could be closer than you think.



Growing the Team

Our new Lifeline Mid Coast merch bags have been making their way out into the community at recent events, and they're already making an impact. More than just a conversation starter, they've helped spark interest, create connections and welcome new people into our organisation.

It's been exciting to see fresh faces stepping forward, bringing new energy and supporting the areas that need it most. If you've been thinking about getting involved in something new, this is a great reminder that there are always opportunities to jump in and be part of our community engagement.



Art Walk Volunteers



Please note this is AI Generated and for reference only

Lifeline Mid Coast is proud to be part of one of Port Macquarie's largest community events for the very first time... ArtWalk - and we need your support to bring The Tunnel of Hope to life.

We're currently seeking:

- **Planning committee members**
- **Volunteers for the night**
- **Set up and pack down support**

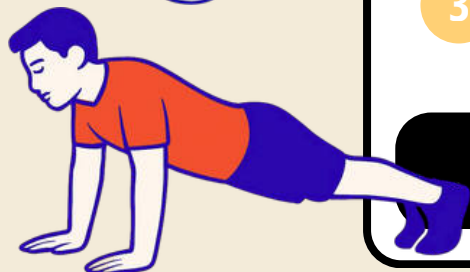
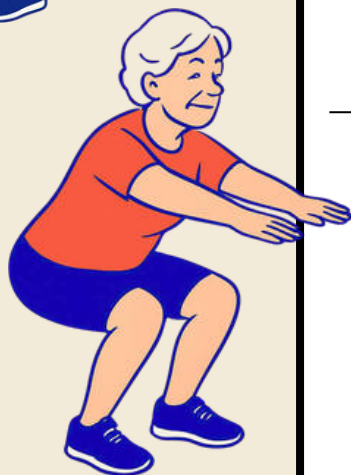
Whether you can give a few hours or take on a larger role, your support will help create a safe, welcoming space for our community.

To get involved, please contact the office and ask for Boni or Mattise.

The Push Up Challenge 2026

Join us in supporting The Push Up Challenge 2026 - one voice at a time.

Whether you take part yourself, start a team, or simply spread the word, every action helps. It doesn't have to be push-ups - choose what works for you, from squats to step-ups. Get your workplace, friends, or family involved and help us grow this into a powerful community fundraiser that supports both mental and physical wellbeing. Help spread the word by sharing with family and friends!



THE PUSH_{UP} CHALLENGE

MID COAST!

Register via lifelinemidcoast.org.au
to support Lifeline Mid Coast

Australia's Largest Mental Health & Fitness Event | 3-26 June | Free to Register

3,307
PUSH UPS

24
DAYS

ALL LEVELS
OF FITNESS

FREE
TO REGISTER

WAYS TO JOIN:

SOLO



GO YOUR OWN PACE

Go solo. Push for better.
No team needed -
just heart!

TEAM



WITH MATES

Invite people to join you and track
your collective stats and individual
rankings.

COMMUNITY



GOT A BIG CREW?

A Community is a collection of
Teams. Perfect for large workplaces,
schools and sporting clubs.

HOW IT WORKS:

1

Register via lifelinemidcoast.org.au (Registration portal open!)

Sign up via lifelinemidcoast.org.au to ensure you are raising funds and awareness for Lifeline Mid Coast and Port Macquarie.

2

Complete 3,307 Push ups - or swap for squats, sit-ups - anything goes!

Work towards the target over 24 days or select to do half.

3

Track via the app + Fundraise

Log progress, read daily mental health facts, stay in touch with teammates, monitor your stats and fundraise

SUPPORTING



Lifeline
MID COAST

Out and About With LLMC

Kempsey Truck Show

Lifeline Mid Coast was honoured to be selected as a recipient of funds raised through the annual Kempsey Truck Show, a well-supported community event that brings people together while raising vital funds for local services.

Through entry fees, fundraising activities, and BBQ sales, the event generates significant support that is shared across a range of organisations, including emergency services and community-based programs. This year, Lifeline was proud to be among the beneficiaries, with team members attending the event to accept the donation on behalf of our service. The truck show also plays an important role in raising awareness of mental health within the trucking community, helping to normalise conversations and encourage support-seeking in a demographic where this is especially important. We extend our sincere thanks to the organisers and community for their ongoing support, with Di Bannister proudly accepting the cheque on behalf of Lifeline Mid Coast.

Seniors Expo

Our Community Engagement team recently attended the Seniors Expo, connecting with community members and creating space for meaningful conversations about the work we do.

With a focus on volunteer recruitment, reducing the stigma that can surround seeking support, and raising awareness of Lifeline's services beyond our retail shops, the team shared how proceeds from our op shops directly fund vital community programs. These conversations helped challenge common misconceptions and opened up discussion about the many ways people can get involved with Lifeline. Those who expressed interest in volunteering received an information pack along with a small selection of Lifeline-branded items, helping keep our services and opportunities front of mind.

CSU O-Week

We recently took part in Charles Sturt University O-Week in Port Macquarie, joining a vibrant Orientation Day filled with activities, music, free food, and a wide range of services welcoming new students.

Our stall offered something a little different - a calm, inviting space where students could sit, connect, and create a personalised keychain. It quickly became a popular spot, particularly for those new to the area or arriving from interstate and overseas, looking to build connections and feel part of the community. The space naturally encouraged meaningful conversations, with many students opening up about the challenges that can come with such a significant life transition and learning more about Lifeline's support services. The strong interest led to a steady queue throughout the day, with students drawn to the opportunity to slow down, meet others, and experience the sense of connection that sits at the heart of what Lifeline is all about.

Out and About With LLMC



The Push Up Challenge

3/6/26 - 22/6/26

(Participate, raise awareness, attend events to promote)

Art Walk

5/6/36

(Comittee spots, planning, art contribution, volunteer at stall)

NAIDOC Day

25/4/26

(Volunteer at stall, Set up/Pack down)

We've got some great community events coming up and would love YOUR support on the day. If you're available to help, please contact the office and ask for Mattise or Boni for more details.



April 2026 Lifeline Connect



Next Newsletter July 2026



Submission Due June 2026



Lifeline Mid Coast
We are local.