

## **Kids Helpline shines a light on priority needs of First Nations and gender diverse young people**

Data released today from Kids Helpline gives new insight into the mental health concerns of children and young people across Australia, while giving voice to First Nations and LGBTQIA+SB mental health and wellbeing issues.

Results from the 2023 Kids Helpline Impact Report, published today, indicates mental health and emotional wellbeing tops the ranking across the nation accounting for (49.7%) of all counselling sessions for children and young people aged 5-25.

The report also highlights an alarming upward trend in suicide-related concerns of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people over the past 5 years indicating a 161% increase (from 330 contacts relating specifically to suicide-related matters in 2019 to 862 in 2023).

In 2023, counselling concerns related to suicide for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth represented 32.1% (one in three) vs 17.1% (one in six) of suicide-related counselling contacts from all other Australian children and young people. There is a strong association of mental health and self-harm concerns amongst these contacts – along with a range of other issues including family relationships, abuse and sexual assault, loss and grief and self-concept and identity.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15-24 experience the highest rates of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, according to Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The impact report also highlights an upward trend in counselling contacts from children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+SB. Over the past five years, (2019 – 2023) there has been 223% increase (from 2,415 in 2019 to 7,796 in 2023), who identify as trans and or/gender diverse. Concerns relate to anxiety, gender identity, mental health and suicide-related struggles.

### **A snapshot of Kids Helpline Impact Report 2023 main findings:**

- 122,356 responses by Kids Helpline counsellors
- 70,618 counselling sessions
- Emotional wellbeing, mental health concerns and suicide-related concerns were the top three concerns
- 161% jump over the last 5 years in the number of counselling contacts with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander youth regarding suicide related issues
- 7,796 of all contacts were from young people identifying as LGBTQIA+SB, with concerns such as gender identity concerns, mental health and suicide
- 3,893 were crisis/safety interventions – 75 every week. Of these 44% (1,706) were related to suicide attempts, up from 37% in 2022.

- 7 out of 10 counselling sessions were provided outside of regular hours (9-5 Monday to Friday)
- More than 1.8 million online users accessed content and resources
- 3,983 My Circle platform users (peer to peer support)

**yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams said the earlier that young people receive support for their mental wellbeing, the better the outcome. In 2023 Kids Helpline recorded more than 1.8M accessing the website content and resources, with 3.2M social accounts reached across Australia with Kids Helpline self-help content. Young people are also supporting each other via Kids Helpline's My Circle platform and generating their own stories and content to support their peers who are experiencing similar struggles.

Kids Helpline is Australia's only 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years and is a service of **yourtown** – free call 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

-ends-

#### contact

For more information or to arrange a media interview, please contact Maree Reason-Cain, **yourtown** Corporate Affairs & Media Advisor.



0423 843 786



[mreason-cain@yourtown.com.au](mailto:mreason-cain@yourtown.com.au)

#### about Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline, powered by **yourtown** is Australia's only free and confidential, 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 – 25. Free call 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

#### about yourtown

**yourtown** is a trusted provider of services for young people, with a focus on mental health and wellbeing, long term unemployment, prevention of youth suicide, child protection, as well as support for those experiencing family and domestic violence.

**[yourtown.com.au](http://yourtown.com.au)**