

# Media release



Tuesday 21 April 2020

## KIDS HELPLINE NEW SOUTH WALES OPENS - NEW ERA FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Kids Helpline a service of **yourtown**, has expanded by opening a purpose-built Counselling Centre in western Sydney this week to support children and young people with what is unfolding as a tumultuous year from bushfires to COVID-19.

An initial 15 professional counsellors have been employed as part of the full capacity expected to double this number of qualified Counsellors, Supervisors and support staff by the end of May.

“Opening a Kids Helpline Counselling Centre in western Sydney has been demand-driven with New South Wales leading the nation for demand on Kids Helpline services representing 31% of the national contacts to Kids Helpline. Funding from the New South Wales Government will enable Kids Helpline to increase our capacity with over 18,000 extra responses per year. Our growth in demand continues to grow so our services need to grow too,” said **yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams.

“Kids Helpline Sydney will give young people across New South Wales greater access to counselling support when they need it most and could prevent more serious mental health issues through early intervention. Calls and contacts originating from New South Wales will be prioritised to be answered by staff at Kids Helpline Sydney.

“The increased staffing of Kids Helpline could not have come at a better time with Kids Helpline experiencing a 40% increase in demand compared with the same time last year. The whole community is being impacted by what has taken place this year, firstly bushfires and now COVID-19, the surge of contacts to Kids Helpline is reflective of the level of anxiety and concern children and young people have for themselves, their family and their friends.

“Our aim is to be able to support thousands more children and young people as soon as we possibly can, that’s the most immediate outcome, to have more counsellors to increase capacity to respond to more young people. We are seeing demand for Kids Helpline also driven by trust in our brand which has been in community for 29 years,” Ms Adams said.

If young people want to talk to someone they can contact Kids Helpline on free call 1800 55 1800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or via Webchat or email at [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)  
Facebook: @kidshelpline, Insta @kidshelplineau, Twitter @KidsHelplineAU.

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