

Case study: Lake Macquarie City Council prioritises the Charter

Lake Macquarie City Council signed the *National communications charter (the Charter)* to support continued improvements in mental health and suicide prevention.

The City of Lake Macquarie is a local government area in the Hunter Region of New South Wales servicing more than 220,000 people. Improving mental health and preventing suicide is a key priority of Lake Macquarie City Council.

Objectives

Lake Macquarie City Council aims to continually improve mental health and suicide prevention initiatives and services in the city. Community leaders must prioritise and communicate about mental health and suicide prevention in ways that support council stakeholders, and improve practices within the organisation to better address mental health issues.



It's so important that we as a council shine a light on this, provide services and activities to address it, and do what we can to reduce the stigma surrounding it.

Kay Fraser, Former Mayor
Lake Macquarie City Council



Solutions

Former Lake Macquarie Mayor, Kay Fraser saw signing the Charter as an opportunity to formalise a commitment to mental health and suicide prevention communications. Council successfully moved a motion at the 2022 Local Government NSW Annual Conference encouraging councils across the state to acknowledge mental health as a priority by signing the Charter and implementing its principles.

Benefits to policy and practice

The Charter principles underpin the Let's Lift Lake Mac wellbeing program, mental health first aid training (which approximately 20% of employees have completed) and regular Council-run events for seniors, and other population groups in the community at risk of experiencing mental health concerns or suicidal thoughts and behaviours.