



CREATIVE THERAPIES PILOT

Robinvale

From July 2025 to June 2027, the Australian Government is piloting new music and art therapy services for people living with mental health conditions and Murray PHN has been commissioned to pilot a new creative therapies service in Robinvale.

Who we talked to in the community and what they said

Murray PHN consulted with community stakeholders from April to June 2025 to understand how to design an accessible creative therapies service that meets the needs of the Robinvale community.

Organisations	Our Place, Robinvale Network House, Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative Elders lunch, Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council Conversation Café, Regional Arts Victoria (Swan Hill), Department of Justice
Other location visits	Robinvale Resource Centre, Robinvale P-12 College, Our Place Community Garden, Robinvale Easter Camp, Robinvale Library, Robinvale Civic Centre, Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative community hall, Robinvale Senior Citizens Centre
Focus groups and digital survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Community Yarning Circle – 12 participants Three focus groups with a total of 48 participants from a range of cultural backgrounds 12 respondents to online survey
What the community said	
Target population	Need across all ages and groups. Children and youth services specific program to be considered
Service model	A combination of drop-in groups, closed groups and individual sessions
Location	Accessible community spaces and outreach, outdoor spaces
Referral and eligibility	Informal drop-in and self-referral with no diagnosis needed. Open to NSW and Victorian participants
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe community spaces where people already gather, with breakout and outdoors areas Community spaces that are culturally safe spaces for all diverse groups in the community Visible displays in support of community members from diverse groups
Times	Flexibility including after hours and weekends. Demand will fluctuate due to seasonal work
Access	Family and carer/support friendly. Volunteers providing transport

Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma around the term ‘therapy’. Creative therapists have the opportunity to break down the stigma around mental health • There is a need for clear information about what music and art therapy is, and what to expect in the program
Resources	Art packs and music equipment made available for home use
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with local artists, including Indigenous artists in the cultural healing space • Creative therapists will need to work with existing groups and build trust in community - working in Robinvale is relational • Support need for families and carers
Place-based considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more than 50 languages spoken in Robinvale - all communications and programs need to take this into account • Many people in the region are undocumented; there need to be pathways for undocumented participants • There is a significant lack of face-to-face mental health services in place for all age groups • The diversity of creative and wellbeing practices in different cultural communities needs to be considered • Many families are living with intergenerational trauma, and many families are caring for children and young people from their extended family groups • There is deep concern in the community about the significant number of suicide deaths in the region
Suicide awareness and prevention	A range of stakeholders shared their deep concern about the significant number of suicide deaths in the region, and their belief that creative therapies may be an effective support for people experiencing suicidality due to mental health conditions
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older men spoke openly about their own struggles with mental health, and their experience of a lack of support services • Aboriginal community workers and families spoke about the need for creative therapies for Aboriginal men in partnership with local Indigenous artists
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The perspectives of LGBTQIA+ community members were not strongly represented in this consultation • The experience of racial differences and racism was described as a significant factor in the community • There is urgent need for mental health services across the community. It will require strategic planning and leadership to ensure that creative therapy resources are simultaneously targeted and contribute to whole-of-community wellbeing.

What’s next – how to access the service and more

Your local provider for the Creative Therapies Pilot is

Mallee Family Care

For more information, call 03 5023 5966.

Further information

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