

## **Gidget Foundation Australia welcomes landmark \$26.2 million investment to fund the opening of 12 new perinatal mental health centres nationally**

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- **Gidget Foundation Australia welcomes landmark \$26.2 million investment to fund the opening of 12 new perinatal mental health centres for expectant and new parents**
- **This Perinatal Mental Health Week (6-12 November), Gidget Foundation Australia is encouraging parents to seek help and reach out to perinatal mental health services**

**EMBARGO: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022** – With demand for perinatal mental health services continuing to surge year-on-year, Gidget Foundation Australia (GFA) welcomes the landmark \$26.2 million investment to fund the opening of 12 new perinatal mental health centres for expectant and new parents over the next four years.

New research released in line with Perinatal Mental Health Week (6-12 November) reveals a greater need for perinatal mental health support, with less than half (49%) of parents saying they have open conversations about how they are feeling. In fact, GFA clinicians delivered 127% more clinical treatment services in 2021 than in 2020, which was already up by 69% in 2019.

The Australian Government's \$26.2 million investment will go towards meeting the urgent mental health needs of Australia's newest and growing families. The investment includes \$15.85 million funding to GFA to support the establishment and operation of 12 new centres expanding on the existing 24 Gidget Houses currently operating across the country, and over \$10 million for Medicare and associated costs for the provision of free psychological support at the centres. This new investment complements previous Australian Government funding into national perinatal screening, ensuring there are places to go for expectant and new parents to access early support for perinatal mental health issues.

Research by Gidget Foundation Australia reveals the burden of mental health issues is of major concern to parents, as the responsibilities of parenting are impacting other aspects of their lives. This comes as a quarter (25%) of parents say they never have time to themselves, while nearly a third (29%) say parenting is their only priority.

**Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Emma McBride MP, says,** "The Albanese Government is taking a national approach to mental health and wellbeing and suicide prevention, to make sure all Australians, including new and expectant parents, have access to the care and support they need close to home.

"The new national screening program will identify the needs of parents early, so they can get the right care, at the right time. That's why we're investing in the Gidget Foundation Australia, to improve access to psychological support with a perinatal mental health specialist."

**Arabella Gibson, CEO of Gidget Foundation Australia, says,** "We're thrilled on behalf of families across Australia as demand for services has been evident for some time now. We're committed to increasing our service delivery to help meet the ever-growing need, both in metro and regional areas, so this investment is instrumental in enabling us to make our perinatal mental health services even more accessible.

"With Gidget Houses currently operating in 24 locations, GFA is already the largest known contractor of perinatal specialist mental health clinicians delivering psychological services nationwide, providing inclusive and holistic support. With this funding we are able to facilitate support for the growing number of those diagnosed through increased screening and provide much-needed treatment and psychological support.

“This announcement comes ahead of Perinatal Mental Health Week where Gidget Foundation Australia along with 45 other perinatal mental health organisations are uniting to ensure that families across the country know they are heard. With one in five new mums and one in ten new dads experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety, around 100,000 Australian parents each year, it’s pleasing that we’re able to make such big steps towards increasing access for everyone who needs support,” she says.

Despite two-thirds (63%) of Australian parents generally enjoying parenthood, 40% admit to finding parenting unexpectedly challenging. Concerningly, the majority (83%) of parents don’t see a mental health professional when needed, and 13% don’t currently do anything about their family’s mental health but feel they should.

**Clinical Psychologist at Gidget Foundation Australia, Chris Barnes** says, “Mental health stigma can be a contributing factor as to why parents aren’t seeking the help they need. The theme of PMHWeek this year is “We’re here, we get it”. Here at GFA we really try to understand that everyone’s parenting journey is different. We provide tailored clinical support to all mums, dads, non-birth parents or those impacted at this uniquely challenging time hoping to redress some of the findings of our research and have better outcomes for Australian families.”

Ends.

#### **About Perinatal Mental Health Week (6-12 November)**

Gidget Foundation Australia along with 45 other organisations across Australia are uniting to raise awareness and break the stigma around perinatal mental health. With their experienced and extensive team, the not-for-profit’s clinicians can guide parents struggling with their mental health and help them feel less alone on their journey through parenting. Visit [www.pmhweek.org.au](http://www.pmhweek.org.au)

#### **About Gidget Foundation Australia**

Gidget Foundation Australia (GFA) is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents, to ensure they receive timely, appropriate and specialist care. GFA provides a range of clinical treatment programs. These include individual psychological consultations (with no out-of pocket expenses) via face to face or telehealth, group treatment and early intervention screening.

With more than 100 clinicians across Australia, GFA is the largest known contractor of perinatal specialist mental health clinicians delivering psychological services nationwide. The GFA workforce includes: clinical psychologists, registered psychologists, mental health accredited social workers and occupational therapists.

#### **About the research and citations**

The research by Gidget Foundation Australia was carried out on a national representative sample of 1004 Australians aged 18 and over in April 2022. Methodology: The data sample was weighted against ABS data for age, gender and location using an online survey that is independently conducted and verified PureProfile.