MEDIA RELEASE

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Giz A Break closes programs, highlighting the need for better mental health support for regional young people

After seven years of supporting young people through outdoor experiences and relationship-based programs, regional charity Giz A Break is preparing to wind down its programs by 31 December 2026, amid increasingly complex participant needs and a challenging funding environment.

Giz A Break, a registered charity established in 2019, has announced plans to wind down its programs, bringing to a close a unique approach to integrating youth and social work into an offroad touring format.

Working primarily across Shepparton in Victoria and Hay in New South Wales, Giz A Break has supported young people experiencing a range of challenges, including mental health difficulties, social disadvantage and barriers to accessing mainstream services.

The decision follows a significant shift in the needs of the young people accessing its programs, alongside declining funding and concerns about the organisation's long-term financial sustainability.

“It's a difficult decision because the need for this kind of support hasn't gone away,” said Rebecca Lovell, chair of Giz A Break’s board of directors.

“We've seen firsthand how important it is for young people to have opportunities to build relationships, experience connection and feel supported. At the same time, the needs of the young people coming to us have become increasingly complex, and we need to be honest about what our organisation can sustainably and safely provide.”

A growing gap in regional support

Giz A Break was established to provide early intervention and resilience-building opportunities for young people who may not be well served by mainstream mental health and social services.

Over time, the organisation has increasingly worked with young people experiencing complex and overlapping challenges, while seeking to strengthen its own approach through social work expertise, external clinical supervision, and advice through GV Health's Specialist Outreach Consultation Service.

However, access to appropriate specialist mental health services remains a significant challenge for some young people in regional communities.

At the same time, changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) contributed to a reduction of approximately a quarter in Giz A Break's revenue between 2024–25 and 2025–26.

With suitable funding opportunities increasingly difficult to secure, the organisation has concluded that continuing its current level of service delivery is not financially sustainable.

“We believe young people deserve support that is appropriate to their needs, particularly when they face multiple challenges and the usual pathways into services are difficult to navigate,” said Sönke Tremper, Giz A Break founder and executive manager. “We have strived to provide a high-quality service meeting these needs in a nuanced way, but funding simply hasn’t kept pace.”

“Giz A Break's experience has reinforced for us how important accessible, trauma-informed support is in regional communities. We hope the lessons from our work will contribute to ongoing conversations about how that support can be delivered and sustained.”

Supporting young people through the transition

Giz A Break's immediate priority is to communicate directly with participants and their families, honour existing commitments where possible, and help young people explore alternative support options where appropriate services are available.

The organisation acknowledges that the closure may be difficult for participants and families, particularly those who have developed trusted relationships through the programs.

Conversations are also planned with other organisations to explore whether aspects of Giz A Break's work could have a future through a different arrangement. No continuation of programs or transfer of operations has been confirmed.

“We know that a program is about more than the activities themselves. It's also about the people, the relationships and the sense of connection that can develop over time,” said Dallas Piggott, social work lead at Giz A Break.

“We want to approach this transition with care, be honest about what we know and don't know, and do what we reasonably can to support the young people and families affected.”

Celebrating the Giz A Break community

Giz A Break will bring together participants, families, supporters, staff and volunteers for a celebration on **10 December 2026**, recognising the people and experiences that have shaped the organisation since its establishment.

The event will provide an opportunity to reflect on the organisation's journey and acknowledge the contribution of the many people who have helped make its programs possible.

As Giz A Break prepares for its planned wind-down by the end of December, it hopes its experience will help draw attention to the ongoing need for accessible and appropriate support for young people in regional communities.

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Media enquiries

Sönke Tremper
Executive manager
Giz A Break
0401 833 110
engage@gizabreak.org.au

About Giz A Break

Giz A Break is a registered charity established in 2019 that delivers youth and social work interventions through four-wheel-drive touring and outdoor experiences. Its work has focused on supporting young people aged 10–25, particularly those who face barriers to mainstream mental health and social services. The organisation has delivered programs in the Shepparton region of Victoria and Hay in New South Wales.