

## **New perinatal mental health and early parenting services arrive in Shellharbour offering free support for expectant and new parents**

- **Vital psychological support and early parenting services for new parents arrives in Shellharbour – the 12<sup>th</sup> service to be rolled out across New South Wales**
- **One in five new mums and one in ten new dads experience perinatal depression and anxiety during the perinatal period**
- **Gidget House Shellharbour launches in collaboration with Stockland and parent support service Karitane to bring essential free services to local mums and dads**

**EMBARGO: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May.** Expectant and new parents experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety (PNDA) can now access GP-referred, free psychological counselling sessions at **Gidget House at Stockland Shellharbour**.

This brand-new Gidget House launches in collaboration with **Stockland** and parent support service **Karitane** and will officially open at the Community Room at Stockland Shopping Centre, 211 Lake Entrance Road, Shellharbour on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The service offers free individual perinatal psychological counselling services and consultations with child and family health nurses by appointment. The service for expectant and new parents has been endorsed by the Minister for Mental Health, Women and Regional Youth, **the Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC**.

Minister for Mental Health & Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC, said there can be no doubt that babies are a blessing, but when a baby arrives it can also be one of the most challenging times in a mother's or father's life.

"Sometimes we can forget that it can be a stressful, lonely and overwhelming time caring for a newborn. I acknowledge the wonderful staff from the Gidget Houses; they are passionate about helping families in their hour of need and I'm proud to be part of a government that supports Gidget Foundation Australia," she said.

Michelle Abbey, General Manager of Retail at Stockland, said the new services offer the community valuable and accessible support from the convenience of their local neighbourhood centre. "We understand that it's very common for new parents and families to experience anxiety and depression when adding a new member to the family.

"We're pleased to partner with Gidget Foundation Australia and Karitane to provide specialised support services to our customers and the broader community in such an important time of need.

"As one of the largest shopping centres in the Illawarra region, we are committed to working with retailers and service providers to add to the diversity of our retail mix and also make a real difference to people in the community."

Gidget Foundation Australia CEO, Arabella Gibson, said, "Speaking about mental health issues remains really difficult among those living in regional and rural communities and hopefully Gidget House Shellharbour can help to break the stigma, particularly with our perinatal psychologists who

have local understanding. This free service, will help local families who would otherwise struggle to pay for specialist counselling.”

Ms Gibson said the partnership with Stockland and Karitane is a meaningful collaboration for expectant and new parents in Shellharbour and the surrounding region.

“Over the past year, we’ve increased our service provision by 243%. Whilst it is unfortunate that there is such a need for this support at all, it’s critical we’re able to expand to ensure we’re able to be there for vulnerable families in need. The services on offer here will mean that so many more mums and dads will have the support they need during this vulnerable and often isolating time in their parenting journey,” she said.

Grainne O’Loughlin, CEO of Karitane said, “Being a parent is one of the most important jobs, it’s exciting and it’s challenging. The first 2,000 days of a child’s life shapes their future and we provide free services to families in this critical time around sleep and settling, feeding, routines and toddler behaviour. We are excited to be expanding the Karitane and Gidget Foundation Australia collaboration.”.

Pregnancy and childbirth bring much joy along with a few challenges, and Gidget Foundation Australia, Stockland and Karitane all recognise the importance of emotional wellbeing for expectant and new parents, and the need to provide them with support and services.

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### **About Gidget House**

Gidget House at Stockland Shellharbour joins other NSW Gidget House services in Randwick at Karitane, Merrylands at Stockland, North Sydney, Manly at Royal Far West, North Sydney at the Mater Hospital and St Leonards at North Shore Private Hospital as well as at Tresillian family care centres in Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Queanbeyan, Taree and Wagga Wagga. Interstate, Gidget Foundation Australia have opened Gidget House’s in Toowoomba at St Vincent’s Hospital (QLD) and Victoria’s first Gidget House in Clayton at Jean Hailes (VIC).

### **About Gidget Foundation Australia**

Previously known as postnatal depression, perinatal anxiety and depression during pregnancy and early parenthood (the perinatal period) affects almost 100,000 Australians each year, equating to 1 in 5 new mums and 1 in 10 new dads. Gidget is the nickname of a vibrant young mother from Sydney who took her own life while suffering from unrecognised postnatal depression. She hid her suffering even from her loving family and friends. They created the Gidget Foundation, determined that what happened to Gidget would not happen to others.

Today, Gidget Foundation Australia assists thousands of expectant parents and their families each year and provides psychological services to parents in need through its Gidget House face-to-face services (at an expanding number of locations), its Start Talking telehealth program and Emotional Wellbeing antenatal screening programs conducted through participating hospitals.

Gidget Foundation Australia is a not-for-profit organisation, supported by the community, the corporate sector, the medical profession, the NSW and Commonwealth Governments, and the media.

### **About Karitane**

Karitane is a not for profit organisation and registered charity supporting families, enhancing the parent-child relationship and building parenting capacity. Karitane are leaders in parenting services with a multidisciplinary team of health professionals dedicated to supporting families with evidence based services and programs. Karitane support families with children from birth to five years around sleep and settling, feeding and nutrition, establishing routines, toddler behaviour and pre and postnatal anxiety and depression.

### **About Stockland**

Stockland (ASX: SGP) was founded in 1952 and has grown to become Australia's largest diversified property group – owning, developing and managing a large portfolio of shopping centres, residential communities, logistic centres, business parks, office assets and retirement living villages. Stockland is rated as one of the most sustainable real estate companies in the world by the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI). Stockland is also an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality, as recognised by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency [www.stockland.com.au](http://www.stockland.com.au)

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