We are Australia’s most well-known and visited mental health organisation. We focus on depression, anxiety and suicide prevention.

In a sense, we are a Big Blue Door to advice, support and connection for millions.

With that comes a deep responsibility to understand the community’s needs.

We listen and respond so when people come to Beyond Blue, they get evidence-based information, support and referrals to protect and improve their mental health and prevent suicide.
Chair’s message

Right around the nation, people have shared stories with me about their mental health and engagement with Beyond Blue.

Time and after time, Australians have told me that Beyond Blue was there for them when they needed it most.

Some have told me about contacting our 24/7 Support Service to talk things through – and how they were reassured and given practical advice that helped them take the next step. Others have found help and support through our website information and online forums.

In addition, increasing numbers of people are participating in our programs and taking positive action in their workplaces and schools.

We are Australia’s most well-known and visited mental health organisation. In a sense, we are the ‘Big Blue Door’ behind which is advice, support and connection for millions of people seeking help for themselves or someone they love.

In 2018/19:

- 12.9 million people visited the Beyond Blue website
- Almost 193,000 people contacted the Beyond Blue Support Service. Nearly 40 per cent of those who contact our Support Service have never sought help before
- Most Australians – 89 per cent – were aware of Beyond Blue.

Community is at the heart of everything we do. One thing that has struck me about Beyond Blue is that we do not stand still. We constantly evolve, as we learn more about the community’s needs. We want to ensure that we continue to be here when people need us most. We want to provide the right tools and knowledge in a way that is tailor-made for a person’s individual needs.

Our aim for this strategic plan is to expand our Big Blue Door, transforming the way people engage with us so we create lasting, meaningful relationships that support a person’s mental health over a lifetime.

Over the next three years, we’ll focus on three key areas to achieve our goals – promoting mental health and wellbeing, being a trusted source of information, advice and support, and working together to prevent suicide.

We are committed to helping build the mental health and suicide prevention systems our nation deserves and needs. I am proud to chair an organisation that is working towards a future where communities are strengthened, and every person can achieve their best possible mental health.

The Hon. Julia Gillard AC
Beyond Blue Chair

Beyond Blue acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Land on which our office is based, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend our respect to all Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.
Our vision
All people in Australia achieve their best possible mental health

Our mission
We work with the community to improve mental health and prevent suicide
Over the next three years we’re working on three key areas

1. Promoting mental health and wellbeing

Beyond Blue supports the places where we live, learn, work and play to tackle stigma and discrimination and champion mental health and wellbeing. This is so people have greater knowledge, feel safe to talk openly about their issues, and are supported to ask for help when they need to.

2. Being a trusted source of information, advice and support

Beyond Blue provides practical and evidence-based information, advice and support so we can all better understand how to maintain our mental health and take steps to recover from mental health conditions.

3. Working together to prevent suicide

Beyond Blue plays a lead role in the national effort to prevent suicide through research, information, advice, support, innovation and advocacy.
Every year, people all over Australia are devastated by the loss of a loved one to suicide. These deaths have a ripple effect, well beyond the individual – impacting on families, communities, schools, workplaces and the overall health and resilience of our nation.

The statistics show why we must work even harder, and work differently.

- Every year around 65,000 people attempt to take their own life and more than 3,100 people die by suicide.
- Almost half (around 45 per cent) of the Australian population will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. One million Australians live with depression and two million live with anxiety, making them the most common mental health conditions.
- Millions more are struggling. Life stresses – financial pressures, tough times at work or home, and problems in relationships – are keeping many people below their best.
- The annual cost to the economy of poor mental health is around four per cent of GDP.

People in suicidal crisis are often not equipped with the information, tools and supports to keep themselves safe in their darkest hours.

Despite how much mental health literacy has improved, many people still don’t recognise the signs of mental health conditions or seek support when they need it.

Less than half of all people in Australia living with anxiety and depression access treatment.

One of the barriers to seeking help is stigma and discrimination.

While Australia has come a long way, we still have a lot of work to do.

Many people tell us they find the judgement they experience harder to deal with than their mental health condition.

At work, stigma and discrimination can lead to demotion, isolation or termination and can make it difficult to get a job in the first place.

It can also affect physical health and cause internalised shame – or self-stigma – where people blame themselves for struggling to cope, rather than recognise they have a mental health condition and can seek support to recover.

With four million people in Australia experiencing mental health conditions each year, demand will continue to grow and we need to build a response equal to the task.

We need a system that can provide the same universal, rapid-response, high-quality, affordable services, workforces and supports we routinely provide to people with physical health conditions.

It’s a big challenge but with courage, vision and a clear strategic plan, Beyond Blue will work even harder alongside others to prevent suicide and, working alongside others, help all people in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.
We envisage an Australia where...

**People** have the knowledge, skills, confidence and opportunities to maintain good mental health, reduce their risk of suicide, and have strategies and empathetic supports on-hand, to respond if they start to struggle.

**Communities** work together – in families, neighbourhoods, educational settings, workplaces and online – to create non-stigmatising, respectful and supportive spaces where everyone can achieve their best possible mental health, and play a role in preventing suicide.

**Society** provides the structural supports and policies that support good mental health and prevent suicide, and provides equitable, safe and affordable access to the right type of support at the right time.

By building these connecting pillars of support, over time, we can make our vision a reality.
Community is at the heart of our vision and work
People from all over Australia put their trust in Beyond Blue as a safe and reliable source of mental health and suicide prevention information, advice and support, and hope.

That trust is a privilege we take very seriously and is why we place the community at the heart of everything we do. We give people the tools and knowledge they need to survive and thrive, whatever the state of their mental health – from low-level worries right through to life-threatening distress.

We’ll always listen to what the community needs, working closely with individuals, families, community groups, education, businesses, researchers, mental health and suicide prevention colleagues, and governments to provide contemporary, effective support to improve mental health outcomes and prevent suicide.

No matter where they live or what their background, we want everyone to feel we will be there if they need Beyond Blue. We’ll proactively seek out communities who haven’t previously connected with us, often through other organisations who are trusted by those communities. We will always be aware of equity and that different groups will have different needs.

We recognise Australia’s First Peoples have unique needs based on a history of grief, loss and trauma. We’re committed to working side-by-side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities, organisations and services, advocating for them to have control over their own social and emotional wellbeing.

We believe it takes a village to support someone who’s struggling, and that expertise comes in many forms. That’s why we’ll always involve those with personal experience of anxiety, depression and suicide and their families, friends, colleagues, employers and educators, to create strong local communities and build a mentally healthier society.
Our values reflect who we are, guiding us to always put community first

**Collaboration**
We’re at our strongest when we work together with the community, listening and learning in a spirit of cooperation. We treat all people, and other organisations, with humility and compassion and value the knowledge they share with us.

**Enthusiasm**
We serve the community with an enthusiasm that is contagious and inspiring. Our passion for strong mental health outcomes in our life and work is channeled into meaningful action.

**Innovation**
We’re always learning and never complacent. To meet the community’s ever-changing needs, we must continuously evolve. So we ask questions, adopt a flexible mindset, encourage fresh ideas and are always open to new ways of doing things.

**Respect**
Every mental health journey is different and we respect the unique experiences of all people in Australia. We believe diversity makes our communities stronger and we tailor our services to reflect this.

**Excellence**
Everything we do is informed by the question: ‘How will this help people?’ And if it won’t, we don’t pursue it. We’re constantly improving and refining our work and always ask ourselves, ‘What can we learn?’ and ‘How can we share that learning?’

**Integrity**
Honesty and transparency are the guiding principles for all our work. We’re authentic and open about why, when and how we engage with the community. And we’re transparent about how we use those learnings and what we need to do to improve.
Transforming our ‘Big Blue Door’ to meet community needs

Our vision for the future
A new mum Googles, ‘Why don’t I love my baby’, in the middle of the night. Exhausted and scared, she logs on to the Beyond Blue website and finds an online tool encouraging her to call our support service. She makes the call and gets some short-term help. Then she leaves us.

But we could do so much more. Currently, we don’t have the capacity to follow up once she’s gone. Or to seamlessly connect her with our other services that could provide additional support. Our vision is to transform our systems so we can build lasting relationships with the people who contact us. We want their journey with Beyond Blue to be more than a one-off interaction. We want it to be an ongoing experience tailor-made for their unique needs, supporting them in every aspect of their life.

For this young mum, that could mean that we connect her to our online forums or a NewAccess coach in her area, or other services and tools. When she’s recovered from her postnatal depression, she may want to volunteer or join Blue Voices – our online reference group. After she returns to work she might want her company to become a mentally healthy workplace, or run a fundraiser with her colleagues. As her child grows and starts kindergarten, she could help them be part of our Be You initiative for early learning centres and schools.

To provide the best mental health and suicide prevention support, we have to see the person’s whole life, not just the problem with which they present. When they contact Beyond Blue, we want it to be the first step in a relationship where we support them, on their terms, for years to come.

Improving our ‘Big Blue Door’
Beyond Blue is Australia’s most visited and trusted mental health organisation and with that trust comes a responsibility to ensure we’re providing the right support and advice at the right time. We are the ‘Big Blue Door’ for many in the community. A safe and reliable place for millions of people who are at any point on the mental health continuum – whether they’re well and want to stay that way, unwell and need support, or in recovery and want to connect with others and give back. Our door is always open and when people come through it, their experience with us should be responsive to their individual needs.

Our aim is to streamline access to, and the responsiveness of, our ‘Big Blue Door’. We will build a better online platform that will make it easier for people to find what they need, whether that’s provided by Beyond Blue or our partners. We will also continue to connect with people in the community at events, with our resources and through our amazing speakers, Ambassadors, Blue Voices and volunteers. No matter how people connect with Beyond Blue – whether in-person or online – we want them to be supported with services, support, advice and information that’s relevant to them and their needs.

Every part of our organisation will be inter-connected so that someone reaching Beyond Blue through one channel or service will be made aware of other relevant programs or services in their area or online to help them achieve their best possible mental health where they live, work and learn.

Once they come through our ‘Big Blue Door’, we’ll stay connected with them and build a lasting relationship that will help them manage their mental health on their own terms.
The power of community to promote mental health and wellbeing

Building mentally healthy communities where people live, learn, work and play

We’re committed to helping build Australia’s most resilient and mentally healthy generation by improving the mental health literacy of the adults who support children and young people.

To achieve that goal we’ll continue to build on the success of Be You: the national mental health in education initiative. Be You equips educators across Australia with the skills and knowledge to help children and young people achieve their best possible mental health.

As well as promoting social and emotional wellbeing in classrooms and early learning centres, we’ll work with others to ensure parents are equipped to support the mental health of their children by making that a focus of Beyond Blue’s information, advice and support services.

We also recognise that people need support at work and that employers want to provide it. So we’ll collaborate closely with the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance to support the National Workplace Initiative, a framework that aims to have effective mental health strategies adopted by employers across Australia.

The power of storytelling to reduce stigma and discrimination

We know one of the most powerful and effective ways to create change is through sharing the stories of people who have been through their own tough times and come out the other side.

Through our Ambassadors, Speakers Bureau, Blue Voices, and community events, we’ll enable more people to inspire and motivate others by safely sharing their lived experience of mental health, depression, anxiety and suicide.

This grassroots engagement is a vital part of what we do at Beyond Blue and we’re proud to have such strong community connections. We know this sense of belonging directly benefits the mental health of everyone involved.

Supporting vulnerable populations

We’ll continuously evolve to ensure our information, advice, supports and services are available to those in the greatest need, recognising social determinants are significant contributors to anxiety, depression and suicide, which can be exacerbated through lower than average access to services.

We’ll walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to contribute to closing the gap in social and emotional wellbeing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Nobody knows us better than the people we share our lives with. Our families, friends, work colleagues and educators often know when we’re not at our best. They might notice if something’s wrong and can offer a safe haven to express our emotions or can encourage us to take positive actions to look after ourselves. These community support networks play a pivotal role in safeguarding our mental health and in preventing suicide.

A mentally healthy community is one that models positive behaviour, encourages emotional self-care, enables healthy inclusive relationships, and creates a culture where people feel safe to ask for support when they need it.

Beyond Blue has an important role to play in building this community resilience, empathy and connection, and in helping people to understand mental health and suicide, reduce stigma and discrimination, and support each other to achieve their best possible mental health.

“Beyond Blue reminds me and others that there are people who are also facing similar problems. It is like a community with its common goal to help those who are struggling.”

Blue Voices member
We want the community to trust us as a reliable, practical source of mental health and suicide prevention advice and support. When we provide information relevant to someone’s personal struggles, it has the potential to inspire, to humanise and to make them feel less alone. It’s a powerful way to drive change and offer hope to people from all walks of life.

We are the most visited and well-known mental health organisation in Australia and our reputation for uncompromising quality means our content is always evidence-based, well-written, factually correct and well-presented. This is done in close collaboration with all our audiences and community partners.

Over the coming years we’ll review and refine our resources to ensure we reflect people’s experiences across the continuum of mental health – from periods of wellness and having normal emotional reactions during stressful times, through to having either once-off or ongoing anxiety and/or depression and being in recovery.

In a modern digital age we understand people are bombarded by conflicting advice, which can cause confusion and a sense of being too overwhelmed to act. We’re committed to cutting through the noise by being solutions-focused, accessible and consistent - empowering people by offering clear pathways for further support.

“The New Access program has been a life-changer for me. My coach listened, understood and encouraged me, was never judgmental, and gave me hope.”

NewAccess participant

Actively connecting people with information

We’ll continue to advance the community’s understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and promote help-seeking, by encouraging reflection and action through memorable, impactful content on broadcast and social media channels.

As the way people consume information changes, our digital strategy will evolve to ensure we’re reaching people wherever they are. We will continue to be online, at the end of a telephone or face to face. We want to be there for people in their darkest moments, through traditional and digital channels.

Extending availability of low-intensity support services

Beyond Blue is proud to have demonstrated the effectiveness of low-intensity support services through the trialling of NewAccess, a coaching program to help guide people through challenging times. The ongoing development of new workforces to support low-intensity services is critical to a more responsive and sustainable mental health system.

We’ll work together with others to extend the availability of these services through both advocacy and by continuing to learn and evolve from the success of the growing number of NewAccess services across Australia.

Streamlining our ‘Big Blue Door’

We’ll streamline access to, and the responsiveness of, our ‘Big Blue Door’ by developing an integrated online platform that will transform the way people connect with us and our supports.

The Beyond Blue Support Service will be reformed and integrated with the new platform to provide a consistent experience across a range of channels.

We’ll leverage current and emerging technology to provide the community with easy to access information and tools, developed in partnership with the community, sector and leading experts.

Influencing change through policy, advocacy and research

We’ll work with others to contribute to the mental health and suicide prevention knowledge base through mixed method research and the translation of findings into practice. Insights from the community and evidence from research and practice will influence our policy positions and advocacy efforts to improve mental health and reduce suicide.
Working together to prevent suicide

The tragic toll of suicide is being felt in communities all across Australia. More than 3,000 people take their own lives every year. Behind every one of these statistics is a family reeling from the loss of a loved one.

On average, a person who died by suicide in 2017 lost 34.5 years from their life. The ripple effects for individuals, families, colleagues, and communities can be devastating and extend long after the event.

The causes are complex. Some mental health conditions can be linked to an increased risk of suicide but not everyone who dies will have a diagnosed mental health condition. Suicide deaths and attempts are often linked to short-term feelings of helplessness or being overwhelmed by stressful life events such as relationship difficulties, social isolation, job loss or financial or housing stress.

People who have attempted suicide often say that rather than wanting to die they just wanted their unbearable pain to end. These insights tells us that if people are supported to stay safe, to reduce distress and manage through suicide ideation, they can find their way back to living.

“The Way Back Support Service helped me to re-immersse myself back into life by showing me that it’s the small things and the small steps in day-to-day life that are worth celebrating and pursuing.”

The Way Back Support Service participant

Expanding The Way Back Support Service

The Way Back Support Service targets people at high risk of dying by suicide, offering non-clinical, assertive outreach, follow-up care and practical support to people in the direct aftermath of a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis.

We’ll continue to work with the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to expand the reach of this service to up to 25 sites over the next three years.

Suicide prevention support for early learning services and schools

Educators are well-placed to spot the signs of suicide risk in children and young people. The Be You Suicide Prevention and Response resources and support services provide clear, practical and reliable guidance to assist schools.

It offers strategies for supporting students, staff, families and the broader community. We’ll work with schools to help them support a young person at risk of suicide, be ready should a death by suicide occur, respond in the immediate aftermath and manage the subsequent recovery for the school community.

Promoting information and advice

Our practical and evidence-based information, advice and support will have a specific focus on supporting people – and those around them – through suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Our Beyond Now safety planning tools (available on both the Beyond Blue website and through a smartphone app) will be an important feature of our new integrated platform.

We know it can be distressing when someone you care about wants to harm themselves. That’s why we’ll continue to promote messages that educate people on how they can safely reach out to someone who seems to be struggling.

Continue to learn and share knowledge

There is a national effort underway to prevent suicide and reduce the death toll, and Beyond Blue will play a lead role in driving change. We’ll continue to collaborate with communities, sector organisations, governments and researchers to learn more about how we can come together to reduce suicide.

As we continue to expand our knowledge, we’ll be bold in advocating for the supports and systems required to support recovery when suicidal distress arises.
Our business head drives our strategy
We succeed by having a community heart and a business head.

Beyond Blue always puts the community first, and we achieve that vision with a dynamic, focused and highly strategic approach. We use best business practices to deliver efficient, high quality programs with the best people and resources. We will be a leader in workplace mental health, enabling our people to flourish.

We work in partnership to improve impact

We recognise we can’t achieve our vision by working alone – we work with and learn from the community, education, business, philanthropy, our mental health and suicide prevention colleagues, and across government. Our engagement with partners will be based on shared values and be purposeful, inclusive, transparent and respectful.

We will build our technical and digital capabilities to reach more people

Much of what we do has a digital element, requiring us to recognise the unique technical challenges we may encounter. We’ll strengthen these capabilities to better understand and respond to community need and deliver personalised support informed by community insights and data.

Our flexible ways of working will benefit the community

To improve our impact, we will embrace flexible ways of working. Our flexibility means we can adapt and respond better to meet the needs of the community. We recognise our strength is in our collective wisdom, unique skillsets and diverse views.

We will be well governed, and demonstrate our impact

Our governance model balances stability and strong oversight, with dynamic decision-making processes that support responsive ways of working. We will measure our success – and our learnings – and share our insights with donors, philanthropists and government.

Sustainable and diverse funding sources support our social impact

As a leading Australian not for profit organisation, Beyond Blue will continue to develop a sustainable and diverse funding base, that strengthens our culture of philanthropy. We will invest and spend wisely, and plan for the longer term.
Vision
All people in Australia achieve their best possible mental health

Mission
We work with the community to improve mental health and prevent suicide

1. Promoting mental health and wellbeing
   - Mentally healthy community development
   - Storytelling to reduce stigma and discrimination
   - Supporting vulnerable populations

2. Being a trusted source of information, advice and support
   - Big Blue Door: integrated online platform and support services
   - Actively connecting people with information, advice and support
   - Extending opportunities for low intensity support
   - Influencing change through policy, advocacy and research

3. Working together to prevent suicide
   - The Way Back Support Service
   - Be You Suicide Prevention and Response Service
   - Information and advice on preventing suicide
   - Continuing to learn and share knowledge

We will build our technical and digital capabilities to reach more people

We are well governed and demonstrate our impact

We are a dynamic, focused and highly strategic organisation with a community heart and a business head

We work in partnership to improve impact

Sustainable and diverse funding sources support our social impact

Our flexible ways of working will benefit the community