



Beyond Blue position on social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Social and emotional wellbeing is a holistic concept which underpins both individual and community wellbeing. It describes the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of a person and recognises that connection to land, sea, culture, ancestry, family and community are important to people and can impact on their wellbeing.

Action on social and emotional wellbeing is critical in its own right. However, it is also a lynchpin to improving other domains – such as education, workforce participation, and mortality rates. Without good social and emotional wellbeing, it is hard for children to learn, or for adults to get jobs, excel at work and thrive.

Just over two years ago, 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The statement describes the basis of sovereignty of the land for our nation's First Peoples.

The Beyond Blue Board and staff are determined to support an openhearted and respectful response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

- Beyond Blue supports constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent.
- Beyond Blue supports the development of formal structures to give effect to an Indigenous Voice, ensuring all relevant policies are developed in close partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- We recognise the inherent protective factors of Indigenous cultures and communities – those powerful forces of resilience, humour and connectedness to land, family, community, culture and spirituality – that can and should be utilised as sources of strength and healing to ensure social and emotional wellbeing.
- We will work in partnership with Indigenous people and communities to develop solutions to improve outcomes for health and wellbeing.
- We intend to be the best ally we can be, lend our voice when required and listen to learn.

In 2019 the Beyond Blue Board approved a comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy to guide our contribution for the next five years. Through the Strategy, we aim to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing by:

1. Building our cultural competence, a crucial foundation to all our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
2. Ensuring wherever possible our major interventions are adapted, marketed and distributed in ways that work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
3. Building strong relationships to ensure our strategies, interventions and advocacy agenda are informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, leaders and organisations.
4. Supporting research that builds the evidence base on how to support social and emotional wellbeing and prevent suicide.

5. Using our brand, national reach and voice with decision makers and the wider community to support policy reform and to advocate for action to Close the Gap and support Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing.

Beyond Blue acknowledges that there are still community and political discussions occurring about constitutional change and recognition. As that conversation continues, Beyond Blue advocacy will be aimed at our nation adopting the kind of far-sighted change that can bring a new era of healing and unity.

The Beyond Blue Board and Staff believe that with bi-partisan support, shared commitment and collaboration, change is achievable.