



Media Release

21 March 2017

Jeff Kennett hands the reins of *beyondblue* to Julia Gillard

Former Australian Prime Minister, The Hon. Julia Gillard AC, has been named the new Chair of *beyondblue* and will take over from The Hon. Jeff Kennett AC, when he hands over the reins at the end of June.

Mr Kennett founded *beyondblue* in 2000 and has led the organisation with energy and commitment for 17 years as it became a world leader in raising awareness of depression, anxiety and suicide prevention.

"*beyondblue* is part of my DNA," Mr Kennett said. "Outside my family, it has been my most important role.

"I'll miss it, but I'll miss it less knowing that in Julia's hands the organisation will go from strength to strength.

"Julia Gillard's influence as a former leader of this country, her warmth and her commitment to the cause make her the ideal person to lead *beyondblue* when I step down on July 1.

"In her we have found a person who is personally committed to the cause and has the ability to cut through the clutter and drive change for the wellbeing of all Australians."

Ms Gillard – who was elected unanimously by the *beyondblue* Board of Directors – is the first former Prime Minister to run a not-for-profit organisation since Malcolm Fraser launched CARE Australia in 1987.

"My father was a psychiatric nurse so I grew up with an awareness of and commitment to mental health causes," said Ms Gillard.

"I'm absolutely delighted that Jeff and the Board have the confidence in me to take over as Chair of an organisation that has made such a difference in the lives of so many Australians, but there is only ever going to be one Founder and without Jeff Kennett there would not be a *beyondblue* at all."

Mr Kennett said Ms Gillard's appointment reinforced *beyondblue's* fierce bipartisanship.

"*beyondblue's* work is motivated by something bigger than politics; it's about a bipartisan commitment to enhancing the welfare of others and that is an extraordinarily powerful force," he said.

"Nobody owns *beyondblue*. It is owned by the community, in particular those living with mental health conditions, their families, friends and colleagues."

For a video interview with Mr Kennett and Ms Gillard, and still photography please visit:

www.beyondblue.org.au/chair-announcement

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Suggested tweet

Today @JuliaGillard has been unanimously elected by the @beyondblue Board of Directors as incoming Chair from 1 Jul: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Suggested Facebook post

Today @beyondblue announced that former Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard has been unanimously elected by the beyondblue Board of Directors to take over from Founder and Chairman Jeff Kennett when he steps down on 30 June this year.

Mr Kennett said this morning “in Julia we have found someone who is emotionally committed to the cause and has the ability to cut through the clutter and drive change for the wellbeing of all Australians.”

Mental health professionals are available at the *beyondblue* Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3pm-12am AEST) or email responses (within 24 hours).