

# Media release



10 December 2018

## Beyond Blue welcomes Commonwealth funding renewal

Beyond Blue today welcomed federal Health Minister Greg Hunt's announcement of a two-year extension of its core funding from the Commonwealth Government.

**Beyond Blue Chair the Hon Julia Gillard AC** said: "This commitment of \$16.9 million a year to 2021 will allow Beyond Blue to continue with certainty our work in the community, online and in workplaces around Australia."

"It's now more than 18 years since Jeff Kennett founded Beyond Blue. Every day since then Beyond Blue has been working to improve the lives of millions affected by depression, and more recently anxiety, and to prevent suicide. And since day one every Commonwealth Government, no matter its political flavour, has backed this vital work. This kind of bipartisanship around such an important cause is terrific," Ms Gillard said.

"I thank the Morrison Government and Minister Hunt – on behalf of the people we serve – for another two years of core funding which means we can plan ahead with confidence and have more room to innovate.

"We have moved past simply raising awareness to changing behaviour; from just tackling stigma to addressing discrimination; from smaller programs to national initiatives in workplaces and schools; from policy advocacy to incubating innovative new services and helping roll them out at scale; from focusing solely on depression to addressing suicide and anxiety.

"With many others, Beyond Blue is working to support all Australians to achieve their best possible mental health. Our hope is for a society in which people understand and protect their mental health, where those affected can feel safe disclosing their conditions and seek help, knowing they will be supported by their friends, family, workplace and community."

**Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** thanked Minister Hunt for the funding extension, saying it would help Beyond Blue reach even more people where they live, work and play.

"This renewal means we can continue – and strengthen – the initiatives that lie at Beyond Blue's heart," Ms Harman said.

"Last financial year our websites had a record 13 million visitors, over one million people used the online peer support forums and our fantastic Speakers and Ambassadors spoke at 773 events around the country. To date, 19,000 people in workplaces – big and small – have registered with our workplace mental health program, Heads Up. We've commissioned important research studies, including the national study into the mental health and wellbeing of police and emergency services personnel released just two weeks ago.

"With enough petrol to keep the Beyond Blue engine running, we can develop new services and new workforces. Two examples are The Way Back, which supports people discharged from hospital after a suicide attempt, and NewAccess – a free early intervention coaching service that is achieving an average recovery rate of 70% in 22 sites around the country.

"And we can continue the 24/7 Beyond Blue Support Service, which is entirely funded by donations. Of the 170,000 people who contacted our mental health professionals last year, 95% were reaching out to the service for the first time."

*Learn more about identifying and responding to warning signs of suicide at [bb.org.au/2nEx03G](https://bb.org.au/2nEx03G)*

*Mental health professionals are available at the Beyond Blue Support Service via phone 24/7 on **1300 22 4636** or via [www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support) for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).*

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