

1 September, 2020

Brisbane and Sydney trekkers take on Virtual Coastrek in support of Beyond Blue

More than 2,000 trekkers in Brisbane and Sydney will hike 15km, 30km, or 60km in their neighbourhoods for the first ever Virtual Coastrek event supporting Beyond Blue on September 4.

Participants will trek close to home instead of in mass along coastlines to keep in line with coronavirus pandemic restrictions.

Trekkers must abide by public health directions, including physical distancing and wearing masks as required. They will be walking together but apart, keeping in touch with teammates via digital devices while tracking their progress through their Coastrek online dashboard. Trekkers are sponsored by friends and family with all donations going towards the Beyond Blue Support Service, which provides free counselling with skilled mental health professionals, referrals and advice through almost 200,000 phone calls, web chats and emails each year.

Beyond Blue Board Director Johanna Griggs said it was great to see so many participants getting ready to pull on their walking shoes in many corners of the country.

“It’s really heartening that the Coastrek community is staying united in support of Beyond Blue at a time that is challenging the mental health and wellbeing of so many people right around Australia,” Ms Griggs said.

“As a participant myself, I’ve really enjoyed the routine of training for Virtual Coastrek and look forward to completing the 15km challenge with my Huggins Hikers teammates.”

Coastrek founder Di Westaway praised trekkers for adapting to the virtual event.

“We’re overjoyed at the number of hikers who have taken the virtual challenge after the cancellation of their usual mass Coastrek event. It takes courage and resilience to explore your local bush trails, get fit enough to walk up to 60km and then get out and do the walk,” Ms Westaway said.

“I’ll be walking with Coastrek Patron Jennifer Byrne and look forward to getting to the virtual start line.”

Teams completing the Virtual Coastrek:

- Will choose a 60km, 30km or 15km route close to home
- Have completed the Coastrek 12-week training program while fundraising for Beyond Blue
- Will complete challenges throughout their walk, check in to Virtual Luv Stops, win prizes and listen to a Coastrek Playlist available through the Virtual Coastrek Facebook group

The [Coastrek website](#) includes information for participants on how they can trek safely under current coronavirus restrictions in their area.

The virtual event has already raised over \$1 million, with donations closing on September 13. To support an individual or team, visit coastrek.com.au/trekkers

The Beyond Blue Support Service is available via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).

The new Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Service is available 24/7 at coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au. Its dedicated phone line, staffed by mental health professionals briefed on the pandemic response, is now open on 1800 512 348.