

16 November, 2020

Beyond Blue welcomes the Commonwealth's renewed support of Be You

Be You – the national mental health in education initiative – will continue for two more years, following today's announcement by the Prime Minister.

Developed by Beyond Blue and delivered in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and headspace, Be You provides every Australian educator with free online training, practical resources and guidance so they can confidently support the mental health of children and young people and look after their own mental health and wellbeing.

In addition, early learning services and schools are supported by expert staff to implement and tailor Be You to match the specific needs of their learning community.

Almost 11,000 schools and early learning services have adopted Be You since its launch in November 2018 - 70 per cent of all Australian schools and a quarter of all early learning services. Educators have turned to Be You in record numbers in 2020.

The Commonwealth today announced a funding extension of \$23 million each year for two years for Be You as part of an interim mental health package ahead of next year's Federal Budget.

Up to 75 per cent of young people aged between 12 and 18 say their mental health has worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to research from the Black Dog Institute and the University of NSW.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said Be You had experienced record demand this year.

"The events of 2020 have tested children and young people in ways few could have imagined and we've seen parents, carers and educators rally and adapt to support them," Ms Harman said.

"During the pandemic, Be You has seen record engagement and we've focused a lot on supporting educators to look after their own mental health and wellbeing during what has been an incredibly stressful year.

"The care educators have shown for children and young people has been outstanding. They understand the importance of prevention and early intervention in protecting the mental health of the next generation."

With half of all lifetime mental health issues emerging before the age of 14, Be You focuses on changing this through prevention and early intervention. Be You is designed to align with national education standards and State and Territory mental health initiatives. It also provides postvention support after a suicide in a school community.

"This funding renewal means continuity and certainty. We can continue to support early learning service and school communities at a time when they need Be You more than ever," Ms Harman said.

Since mid-March 2020, completion of the accredited Be You professional learning modules are up by 60 per cent, compared to the same period last year. Educators have also participated in online conferences, webinars and interactive sessions in record numbers, with attendances increasing by 211 per cent.

"Beyond Blue thanks the Australian Government for its commitment to supporting the mental health of children and young people across Australia," Ms Harman said.

“Supporting principals, teachers and early learning professionals who spend so much time with our children and young people is an investment in everyone’s future because mentally healthy kids have better learning outcomes.”

For more information about Be You, visit beyou.edu.au

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.