

17 November 2020

Beyond Blue welcomes NSW Government's latest investments in mental health

Beyond Blue today welcomed the \$2.4 billion mental health package announced in the NSW Government's 2020 Budget.

In particular, the NSW Government is demonstrating its ongoing commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of young people by placing 100 wellbeing nurses in NSW schools, **Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** said.

NSW Health Minister Bronnie Taylor and Treasurer Dominic Perrottet announced \$47 million over four years towards the recruitment of an additional 100 student wellbeing nurses to undertake health and wellbeing checks and referrals in schools.

"From the summer bushfires to COVID-19 and the ongoing drought, this has been a challenging year for the people of NSW, and we know children and young people and the adults in their lives need support now more than ever," Ms Harman said.

"This is an important investment and Beyond Blue looks forward to contributing to the thinking about how best to deploy the wellbeing nurses to locations where they're needed most and to ensure a joined-up approach."

This workforce will complement and enhance the Be You national mental health in education initiative, led by Beyond Blue and delivered in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and headspace. The Commonwealth yesterday extended funding for Be You for two years to 2023.

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 via www.beyou.edu.au. 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.

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.

The initiative forms part of a \$2.4 billion mental health package that includes additional peer workers and mental health clinicians, the expansion of the Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response model, virtual mental health services and 12 Mental Health and Wellbeing Community Collaboratives across the state.

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.

Contact: media@beyondblue.org.au

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