

WEDNESDAY, 4 MAY, 2022

Beyond Blue welcomes the 2022/23 Victorian Budget mental health package

Beyond Blue has welcomed the Victorian Government's significant, ongoing investment in the state's mental health system as part of its 2022/23 Budget.

The \$1.3 billion commitment to mental health and suicide prevention follows last year's record \$3.8 billion investment, made in response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman recognised Victoria's ongoing commitment to system reform.

"There's no quick fix - Australia's mental health and suicide prevention systems are fragmented and underfunded," Ms Harman said.

"So it's reassuring to see significant, ongoing investment in Victoria.

"It is great to see support for regional Victoria, an emphasis on community-based services, on suicide prevention and on an expanded clinical workforce.

"Nationally, there remains significant potential in relatively new workforces including the peer workforce. Additionally, the development of the low intensity workforce, which includes mental health coaches, so that the system addresses prevention and earlier intervention as well as crisis support.

"Providing people with better access to the tools and supports that can help them maintain good mental health reduces pressure at the more specialist and acute end of the mental health system."

Highlights of the budget's mental health funding include:

- \$372 million to grow the clinical mental health workforce, including training for existing clinicians;
- \$21 million in suicide prevention including aftercare services, a new LGBTIQ+ service, and an 18-month pilot of a state-wide call-back service; and,
- \$5 million to help plan the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health which will bring together people with lived experience, researchers and clinicians to help shape the mental health system.

Ms Harman said Beyond Blue stands ready to work with all governments to ensure people have access to a world-class mental health system. "Victorians have experienced really tough moments in recent times and we know that the impacts of the pandemic and natural disasters will continue to play out in the years to come," Ms Harman said.

"That's why we need a mental health system that meets people in the right place at the right time regardless of where they live, how much they earn, their cultural background, sexuality or gender identity.

"It's great to see significant investment in mental health services, but Beyond Blue will continue to advocate for a greater focus on prevention and early intervention in systemic reforms. I look forward to exploring the budget in further detail."

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Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service: 1800 512 348 or [coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](https://www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)

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