

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

## Beyond Blue encourages people to seek support after devastating floods

Beyond Blue is encouraging people to check on how they are feeling after devastating floods across Victoria, Tasmania and parts of New South Wales.

Many communities remain in limbo waiting for waters to recede, while other towns are starting to assess the widespread damage and begin to clean-up.

**Beyond Blue Clinical Lead Dr Grant Blashki** said people can experience a wide range of normal reactions in the immediate aftermath of a flood.

“It’s useful to think of the mental health reactions to disaster events in terms of the immediate acute response, such as the first few days or weeks, and the longer-term recovery over months or years,” Dr Blashki said.

“In the short-term, people of course have a mix of feelings such as anger, worry and uncertainty, or feeling out of control. Fortunately, these feelings don’t last long, and people recover well with their own coping skills and support from family, friends and community networks.”

Common experiences include:

- feeling overwhelmed, numb or detached
- unable to focus or plan ahead
- constantly tearful
- intrusive memories or bad dreams
- Replaying the event over and over and questioning what could have been done differently

“If these feelings persist after a month, you may like to consider reaching out for mental health support because getting in early improves your recovery,” Dr Blashki said.

“A small proportion of people do go on to develop anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress conditions, or turn to alcohol or drugs to cope, and this is when it can be useful to see a mental health professional.”

“Those managing pre-existing mental health issues may need more support so it’s a good time for them to check in with their regular health provider, such as their GP or mental health professional, to ensure they have the right supports and plans in place during the disaster recovery.”

Dr Blashki also recommended [Phoenix Australia](#) for further information about looking after yourself following a disaster. [looking after yourself following a disaster.](#)

**Beyond Blue Support Service:** 1300 22 4636 or [beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](https://beyondblue.org.au/getsupport)

**Contact Sarah Farnsworth on 0428 645 457** [sarah.farnsworth@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:sarah.farnsworth@beyondblue.org.au) or [media@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:media@beyondblue.org.au) for interview opportunities