

21 October, 2020

Beyond Blue welcomes new board directors

Beyond Blue today announces the appointment of two new board directors, Professor Helen Milroy and Dr Jason Lee.

Distinguished child and adolescent psychiatrist Prof Helen Milroy, from Western Australia, and rural psychiatrist Dr Jason Lee, from far north Queensland, have joined the Beyond Blue board.

“We are delighted to welcome these esteemed and dedicated professionals to Beyond Blue,” **Beyond Blue Chair the Hon Julia Gillard AC** said.

“As Prime Minister, I appointed Prof Milroy as a Royal Commissioner to the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse inquiry, so I know first-hand the depth of clinical knowledge, experience and humanity she brings,” Ms Gillard said.

“Dr Lee is an accomplished psychiatrist who understands regional and remote communities. He is a seasoned generalist with experience supporting diverse populations and we are privileged to have him on the board,” she said.

“In supporting the mental health of all Australians, these appointments deepen and enhance Beyond Blue’s commitment to child and adolescent mental health, multicultural communities, regional and remote Australia and Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing.”

Prof Milroy has extensive experience as a child and adolescent mental health clinician. She is the Stan Perron Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Perth Children’s Hospital and University of Western Australia. She is also a Member of the RANZCP Foundation and President’s advisory group, and Co-chair of the Million Minds Medical Research Advisory Group. A member of the WA Mental Health Tribunal, Prof Milroy also sits on the WA Care Plan Review panel and serves as an AFL Commissioner. A National Mental Health Commissioner, Prof Milroy is the inaugural Chair of Gayaa Dhuwi Australia.

“I am very excited to join the board of Beyond Blue and be involved in the excellent work they do in mental health,” Prof Milroy said.

“I am particularly interested in the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and perinatal, child and adolescent mental health.”

Dr Lee is the immediate past Chair of the RANZCP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Committee. He trained in rural Australia and has spent over 10 years providing outreach services to remote Aboriginal communities in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Over the past five years, Dr Lee has focused on the development of a culturally safe community mental health service based at the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services.

“We are a nation of incredibly diverse people. Where we come from, where we grow up, who we are, where we live – all these factors inform differences in how we understand our mental health, what help we feel we need, and what help we are comfortable seeking,” Dr Lee said.

“I hope to contribute to Beyond Blue’s recognition and support of our diverse population, particularly in relation to rural and remote Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.”

Two of Beyond Blue’s distinguished and celebrated directors, **Professor Michael Kidd AO** and **Professor Michael Baigent**, have moved on from the board after years of dedicated service.

A distinguished author, academic and medical practitioner, Prof Kidd became a Beyond Blue director in 2011. He has been a GP for more than 35 years and held several influential roles across Australia and around the world.

Ms Gillard thanked Prof Kidd for sharing his extensive understanding of global primary health systems and for his ongoing dedication to supporting the mental health of all Australians.

“Michael is passionate about mental health, preventing suicide and tackling discrimination, and strives to improve outcomes for people who face the greatest adversity,” Ms Gillard said.

“His determination and wise counsel have been a driving force behind Beyond Blue’s advocacy, helping make Beyond Blue the trusted voice it is today. His contribution has been invaluable.”

Since joining Beyond Blue as Clinical Lead in 2006, then being appointed as a director in 2011, Prof Baigent has championed innovation, including in Beyond Blue’s low-intensity service NewAccess and services to improve doctors’ mental health.

Ms Gillard said Prof Baigent had played a vital role in advancing the nation’s understanding of anxiety, depression and suicide.

“Michael’s expertise and insight have been a driving force for Beyond Blue’s commitment to evidence-based practice,” Ms Gillard said.

“He is passionate about research-driven mental health solutions for the community. His clinical and academic expertise have ensured that we combine evidence with pragmatic solutions.”

Prof Baigent said: “I have truly valued the opportunity I have had working over the last 14 years to address depression, anxiety and suicide, as part of the team at Beyond Blue. Although sad that my term is now complete, I am proud of the contribution the organisation has made towards improving the mental health of the Australian community. I am very pleased with the high calibre psychiatrists who are joining the board as there is still more for Beyond Blue to do.”

Deputy Chair Kate Carnell AO, Johanna Griggs AM, Dr Mukesh Haikerwal AC, Dr Jessica Dean, Paul Howes, the Hon Robert Knowles AO, Denise McComish, Russell Taylor AM and Derek Schoen remain on the board.

Prof Milroy and Dr Lee will attend their first scheduled Board meeting in December. Prof Baigent attended his final board meeting in September and Prof Kidd attended his last meeting in February.

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.