



27 March 2026

Beyond Blue and Melbourne International Comedy Festival prescribe ‘Best Medicine’

Beyond Blue and Melbourne International Comedy Festival, in a first-time collaboration, present a special comedy showcase highlighting the power of laughter to build connection and mental wellbeing.

‘Best Medicine’ will be hosted by award-winning British comedian, Carl Donnelly, and feature six celebrated festival comedians, performing at Melbourne Town Hall at 3:30pm on Saturday 4 April as part of this year’s 40th Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

Proceeds will help fund Beyond Blue’s free, 24/7 phone and webchat support service; while audiences can expect a fast-paced, high-calibre showcase of outstanding local and international talent with a shared commitment to making a difference.

Beyond Blue CEO, Georgie Harman AO said Best Medicine would showcase the powerful role laughter can play in our lives.

“Laughter can create space to breathe when life feels heavy and spark the kind of connection that reminds us of our shared experience and that we’re all in this together. Studies show that spontaneous laughter can lower cortisol levels, the body’s stress hormone, meaning it really is some of the best medicine to improve our wellbeing.

“We’re thrilled to be partnering with the festival as it marks 40 years of community and celebration through laughter,” Ms Harman said.

Last year, more than 300,000 people contacted Beyond Blue’s free, confidential, 24/7 support service by telephone or webchat – the equivalent of 800 people a day.

But Ms Harman said research by Beyond Blue and others showed that too many people waited too long to get help.

“We all experience a broad range of emotions in response to life’s challenges, but if it feels too hard or overwhelming it might be time to seek some extra support,” she said.



“Every ‘Best Medicine’ ticket sold helps Beyond Blue be there for everyone who needs us, whenever they need us. And remember, it’s never too early or too late to pick up the phone or chat online with one of our counsellors.”

Melbourne International Comedy Festival Executive Director, Dylan Cole, said:

"Comedy and mental wellbeing have always been closely connected, so partnering with Beyond Blue on the Best Medicine showcase is a natural fit.

“At its simplest, this is about getting people in a room, sharing a moment and reminding people of the mechanisms and support available to them.

“We hope this event encourages people to connect, talk, and to reach out when they need support – as well as leave them with a good dose of laughter!”

Comedy lovers are encouraged to book early and make their laughs count at this year’s Festival: www.comedyfestival.com.au/browse-shows/best-medicine

The Beyond Blue Support Service is free and available 24/7 on [1300 22 4636](tel:1300224636) or online beyondblue.org.au/getsupport.

Available for interviews:

- Beyond Blue CEO, Georgie Harman AO.
- Melbourne International Comedy Festival Executive Director, Dylan Cole.
- Carl Donnelly, Host and Comedian.
- Sam Zito, performing Comedian.

Media contacts

Adam Leach: adam.leach@beyondblue.org.au // 0484 866 430

Madeleine Roughan: madeleine.roughan@beyondblue.org.au // 0480 734 193

--ENDS--

*Statistic from Beyond Blue’s latest [Australia’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Check](#).

[About Beyond Blue](#)



Beyond Blue provides mental health information, support and advice to help everyone feel better earlier and stay well. Last year more than 300,000 people contacted Beyond Blue's free, confidential, 24/7 Support Service. Call 1300 22 4636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support.

About Melbourne International Comedy Festival

Launched in 1987, the first Melbourne International Comedy Festival included 56 shows across 33 venues. Over the years the event has grown to be the world's largest dedicated comedy festival, with a program of almost 700 shows and thousands of performances across more than 130 venues. Annual attendance exceeds 700,000, with live audiences boosted by millions more for nationally broadcast TV and online content. More than a festival, the organisation delivers year-round touring, educational and artistic development programs to support a flourishing comedy industry. For more info and to browse the 2026 Festival program head to comedyfestival.com.au.