



MEDIA RELEASE
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Rural Australians urged to speak up before reaching breaking point

Zoetis and Beyond Blue launch 11th annual campaign to support mental health in regional communities

- Nearly half of Australians who need mental health support wait until they are very or extremely distressed before seeking professional support.¹
- Around 7 million people in Australia (27% of the population) live in rural, regional and remote communities, where access to mental health support can be more limited.
- Only 28% of people feel part of the community where they live, while 1 in 5 are unsure whether they have someone they can rely on for support.²
- More than 18,500 Australians have accessed mental health support through the Zoetis and Beyond Blue partnership, which has contributed \$1 million over the past decade to the Beyond Blue Support Service.
- The 2026 campaign aims to raise a further \$100,000 for the Beyond Blue Support Service.

Australian rural and regional communities have a long history of supporting the nation and each other. Now, as financial pressures, isolation and uncertainty continue to weigh heavily on many people living outside major cities, Zoetis and Beyond Blue are encouraging rural Australians to start a conversation with a friend, family member, neighbour, colleague or a support service.

The campaign marks the 11th year of Zoetis and Beyond Blue partnership and aims to raise a further \$100,000 to support people across Australia experiencing mental health challenges.

Zoetis said the partnership is designed not only to raise funds, but to encourage everyday conversations that can help reduce loneliness, isolation and distress before people reach crisis point.

Peter FitzGerald, Business Unit Director, Livestock at Zoetis, said the long-running partnership reflects Zoetis's ongoing commitment to supporting the rural and regional communities it works alongside every day.

"Rural and regional Australians are often the first to show up for others, whether that is on the farm, in the workplace, at the local club or across the wider community," Mr FitzGerald said. "But many people still find it difficult to talk about how they are really coping.

"This campaign is about helping make those conversations feel more normal. A simple check-in can be the first step towards someone feeling less alone, more supported and more able to ask for help."

Over the past decade, Zoetis has donated \$1 million to Beyond Blue. This year, for every Zoetis livestock, pig, poultry and companion animal vaccine or parasiticide sold between 15 July and 31 October 2026, Zoetis will donate \$5 per product, up to a total of \$100,000, to Beyond Blue.

¹ Social Research Centre (2024). Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check. Beyond Blue.

² Beyond Blue Community Poll, March 2026



Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said the contribution would help ensure more people can access support as soon as they need it.

“Our partnership with Zoetis is so important because it helps us reach communities where pressures like money worries and isolation can be felt the hardest. Last year alone, our Support Service helped more than 300,000 Australians - that’s around 800 people a day, or a call every two minutes. With demand up 12 per cent this year, partnerships like this ensures that we can be there when people need it, while also ensuring support can reach more people earlier.”

The campaign comes at a time when many people in regional, rural and remote communities are facing compounding pressures. Around seven million people, or 27 per cent of the Australian population, live in rural, regional and remote areas, where access to health and mental health support can be more limited than in metropolitan areas.

People living in more regional and remote areas are also more likely to be socially isolated than those in metropolitan cities. For farming communities, these pressures can be especially acute, with weather events, natural disasters, financial stress, inflation and cost-of-living pressures all contributing to mental health strain.

Research by Beyond Blue also highlights the importance of early support and connection. Almost half of people who need mental health support wait until they are very or extremely distressed before reaching out. Stigma, embarrassment, discomfort talking about feelings and fear of burdening others remain significant barriers.

Derek Schoen, farmer, former Beyond Blue board member and now Beyond Blue’s rural and farming community spokesperson, said the campaign recognises the reality that people in rural and regional areas often carry stress quietly.

“When you live and work in a rural community, you understand how closely people support each other, but also how easy it can be to keep things to yourself,” Mr Schoen said.

“Whether it is financial pressure, weather, isolation or the day-to-day demands of running a farm or business, many people just keep going because they feel that is what they have to do.

“That is why starting a conversation matters. You do not need to have the perfect words or all the answers. Sometimes the most important thing you can do is ask someone how they are really going and give them the space to talk.”

Relationships remain one of the strongest protective factors for mental health. Beyond Blue research shows more than eight in 10 people see relationships as very or extremely important to their mental health, while people facing uncertainty and challenges are more likely to rely on social connection than professional support as their first source of help.

However, not everyone feels connected. Only 28 per cent of people feel part of the community where they live, while around one in five people are unsure whether they have someone who would support them if needed, or do not feel supported.

Zoetis said this makes it even more important to encourage conversations that build trust, connection and care within rural communities.

“Starting a conversation does not mean having all the answers,” Mr FitzGerald said. “It can be as simple as asking how someone is going, listening without judgement, or encouraging them to contact a service like



Beyond Blue if they need additional support. It takes strength to reach out for support, but getting help early can ease distress and stop issues from escalating.”

The ‘*Helping Rural Australians Start The Conversation*’ campaign will run from 15 July to 31 October 2026. Australians can support the Zoetis and Beyond Blue initiative by purchasing eligible Zoetis livestock, pig, poultry, and companion animal vaccines or parasiticides. Zoetis will donate \$5 per eligible product, up to \$100,000, to Beyond Blue Support Services, helping more people in rural communities access the support they need.

If you or someone you know needs support, the [Beyond Blue Support Service](#) offers free and immediate counselling, advice and referrals via phone, webchat or email. To talk to a mental health professional for free, contact the 24/7 Beyond Blue Support Service on 1300 22 46 36. Free web chat is also available 24/7 at beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat and people can join the free [online forums](#) and share their experiences anonymously with our online community.

To learn more or find out how to support the campaign, visit: www.zoetis.com.au

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Hi-Res images for media release and case studies are available [HERE](#)

Lived experience case studies from regional and rural Australians are available for media.

About Zoetis

As the world’s leading animal health company, Zoetis is driven by a singular purpose: to nurture our world and humankind by advancing care for animals. After innovating ways to predict, prevent, detect, and treat animal illness for more than 70 years, Zoetis continues to stand by those raising and caring for animals worldwide – from veterinarians and pet owners to livestock farmers and ranchers. The company’s leading portfolio and pipeline of medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and technologies make a difference in over 100 countries. A Fortune 500 company, Zoetis generated revenue of \$9.3 billion in 2024 with approximately 13,800 employees. For more information, visit www.zoetis.com.

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.