

## Holiday Pressures Highlight Need for 24/7 Mental Health Support

The Beyond Blue Support Service is the busiest it's been all year, reinforcing the need for free, accessible, immediate support that's available around the clock and around Australia.

As the festive season gathers pace and pressure can peak, Beyond Blue is reminding the community that free mental health support continues to be available every day, including public holidays.

**Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO** said the holiday period can be a challenging time for many Australians.

"Financial pressures, relationship strain, grief, and loneliness often intensify, especially when expectations of a 'perfect holiday' feel out of reach," Georgie said.

"We want everyone to know that you don't have to wait until the new year to seek support - help is here, right now.

"More people are reaching out to us each month, and that's a good thing. Demand is up about 10 percent on last year which suggests a growing need for mental health support across Australia. And it means that Beyond Blue continues to make sure Australians aren't facing tough times alone."

Every two minutes, someone contacts the Beyond Blue Support Service, by phone, webchat or email. It is a confidential service that offers immediate counselling, advice and referrals right around Australia, 24/7.

"According to independent research<sup>^</sup>, one in six Australians engages with Beyond Blue's content and services each year. This demand reflects the value of free, easy-to-access support that meets Australians where they are," Georgie said.

"Mental health issues or experiences of situational distress are easier to manage when we get onto them early, before they snowball. While having a toolkit is great, at times we all need extra support or a helping hand. And the sooner the better - you don't have to be at crisis point to benefit from support."

**Beyond Blue lived experience speaker Rachael Harman**, experienced her first panic attack at eight years old, but didn't have the words to describe what she was feeling.

"It was just an overwhelming, terrifying feeling that my world was ending," Rachael said.

"I suffered in silence, believing I could cope alone, even as my panic attacks became more frequent and severe. I thought I could manage it myself, but things just kept getting worse. I felt isolated, even when surrounded by loved ones."

More than a decade later, the NSW resident reached out for help.

"I was nervous and maybe even a little embarrassed at the thought of opening up to someone again. But when I finally spoke to a professional, I realised I wasn't alone," she said.

"My experience with the Beyond Blue Support Service was a turning point. When I reached out and spoke to the service, I finally felt like I wasn't alone.

"Talking - whether with a professional, a friend, or a family member - can be the first step to feeling better. It's not always easy, but that vulnerability is the first step to getting the help you need. Even if you start small, it becomes easier every time you open up," she said.

Stories like Rachael's remind us that reaching out for support can be life-changing.

"You don't have to carry the burden alone - help is here, and it works," Georgie said.

"It's the calls that we don't get that worry us most.

"When things feel overwhelming, talk to the people around you, and make a plan. Taking small steps in a positive direction can help you regain a sense of control, remind you that you're not alone with what you're facing, and encourage you to be kind to yourself as you navigate difficult times."

This Christmas, consider donating to Beyond Blue's annual Christmas appeal.

A tax-deductible gift goes directly towards the Beyond Blue Support Service, making mental health support available to anyone in Australia.

"Your support matters to people like Rachael. A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful donors for making people like Rachael feel heard and understood," Georgie said.

Donate to Beyond Blue's Christmas Appeal: [www.beyondblue.org.au/christmas](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/christmas)

**ENDS**

**Beyond Blue's Support Service** is available 24/7 on [1300 22 4636](tel:1300224636) and via web chat or email [beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](http://beyondblue.org.au/getsupport)

**Beyond Blue's online forums** can be accessed here [forums.beyondblue.org.au](http://forums.beyondblue.org.au)

**Coping with festive stress:** [www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health/wellbeing/festive-stress](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health/wellbeing/festive-stress)

#### **Media contacts**

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#### **Talent available for interview**

- Beyond Blue CEO, Georgie Harman AO
- Beyond Blue lived experience speaker Rachael Harman (NSW-based)

#### **Background**

- Last financial year (2024-2025), more than 300,000 people reached out to the Beyond Blue Support Service for support.
- People are often surprised to learn that the costs of the service are covered entirely by donations and philanthropy.
- Every dollar raised enables us to be there when people really need us - every dollar, every cent can really help turn someone's life around.
- Donations are crucial to ensure this important service is always available to people right across Australia.

#### **^Australia's 2024 Mental Health and Wellbeing Check**

- [Australia's 2024 Mental Health and Wellbeing Check](#) was undertaken by Australian National University's Social Research Centre on behalf of Beyond Blue.
- Researchers surveyed more than 5000 people around the country to understand the impact of common life stressors on mental health.
- The Check was a representative survey that gives a reliable pulse check on the current state of mental health and wellbeing in Australia.