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Media Release

Beyond Blue unites national leaders to explore earlier intervention for financial distress

As new Beyond Blue data highlights the significant toll financial hardship is taking on mental health amid persistent cost-of-living pressures, Beyond Blue is building on its leading program of work in money and mental health by bringing together national leaders to identify opportunities for earlier intervention and more effective pathways to support before people reach crisis.

The *Money and Mental Health Roundtable*, hosted by Beyond Blue, convened leaders from governments, financial services, community organisations and lived experience to strengthen collaboration across sectors and help build a shared understanding of the challenges people face, the barriers they encounter and explore opportunities for earlier support.

The Hon Rose Jackson MLC, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Housing, Homelessness, Youth and Water opened the event and joined a panel of other policy makers and experts, including Financial Counselling Australia and a Beyond Blue lived experience Speaker. Attendees included representatives of government agencies, community and social services providers, the banking and utilities sectors, and many others.

As a forum for leaders and experts from across sectors to come together, the roundtable heard from diverse perspectives to better understand people's experiences and explored ways to improve pathways to support across systems, services and communities.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO said the roundtable reflected a growing understanding that financial hardship is not just an economic issue, but a mental health issue, and one that needs stronger collaboration across sectors.

"The strong and symbiotic link between money and mental health has been established for years, and the cost-of-living challenges that record numbers of Australians are facing right now is well documented. This event was about moving past “admiring the problem” to finding pragmatic solutions to support people before they reach crisis,” Ms Harman said.

“Financial distress is a leading driver of distress for Australians and can also be a significant barrier to seeking support. But no single organisation or sector can solve this challenge alone," she added.

“The opportunity now is to better understand how sectors can work together to understand the barriers, enablers and possible solutions for earlier intervention, before people are in crisis. Bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise around this shared challenge helps move the conversation beyond understanding the problem and towards practical opportunities for action.”

The Hon Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Housing, Homelessness, Youth and Water said she welcomed the roundtable's focus on bringing different sectors together around shared challenges.

"Addressing complex challenges like the intersection between financial hardship and mental wellbeing requires a collaborative approach. Bringing together people with lived experience, frontline expertise and leaders from across sectors helps us better understand where the pressures are and where we can make the greatest difference. I welcome the focus on earlier intervention and look forward to seeing the outcomes of today's discussion."

The roundtable comes as new Beyond Blue data highlights increasing financial strain across communities over the past four years, revealing the significant impact financial hardship can have on mental health.

- Rates of anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts or behaviours are higher among people experiencing financial hardship:
    - 51% more likely to report anxiety symptoms.
    - 63% ore likely to report depressive symptoms.
    - 50% more likely to report suicidal thoughts or behaviours.
- One in two people report cost-of-living pressures have negatively affected their mental health.
- More Australians are reporting housing affordability as a concern for their mental health, increasing from 35 per cent in 2022 to 46 per cent in 2026
- Financial wellbeing has declined since 2022, with fewer people reporting they can save money most weeks and more people reporting they spend more than they receive.
- People experiencing financial hardship are more likely to delay seeking professional support.

The findings reinforce that while support for people in crisis remains critical, there is a significant opportunity to recognise financial distress earlier and help people access support before they reach crisis point.

Insights gathered at the Money and Mental Health Roundtable will inform a report capturing emerging themes, ideas and perspectives from participants to help identify priorities for future collaboration, advocacy and action in the money and mental health space.

If you or someone you know is struggling, support is available:

- Beyond Blue's free, confidential Support Service is available 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via webchat at www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support.
- Beyond Blue's Money and Mental Health Quiz and Toolkit, developed with Financial Counselling Australia, offer practical ways to understand and navigate money stress.
- The National Debt Helpline offers free, confidential and independent financial counselling**: 1800 007 007 or ndh.org.au for chat.**

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Available for interview:

- Beyond Blue CEO, Georgie Harman AO

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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.

***Note to editor - methodology**

Data are drawn from a comprehensive dataset, Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check, that was collected by the Social Research Centre (SRC) using their probability-based online panel, Life in Australia™ on behalf of Beyond Blue. The survey is conducted every two years, most recently in May 2026 and previously in July 2024 and November 2022. A total of 15,372 responses have been collected over the three survey waves.