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Media Release

More people seeking early support as Australia's mental health remains under pressure

New national research from Beyond Blue shows more people are seeking support for their mental health, with encouraging signs that Australians are reaching out earlier rather than waiting until they're really struggling.

Released during World Mental Health Month, Beyond Blue's latest *Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check* found 41 per cent of people in Australia sought support for their mental health in the past year, up from 37 per cent in 2022. Importantly, it found fewer people were delaying or going without support (19% down from 22% in 2024), and more people reached out before their distress was at moderate to high levels to someone they know (29% up from 19% in 2024), as well as to professionals (22% up from 16% in 2024).

And while generative AI has become a source of support and advice for one in six Australians (16%), people turned to humans (professionals or someone they know) for mental health support and advice at more than 2.5 times that rate (41%).

Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check 2026 is built on a nationally representative sample of more than 5000 people by the Australian National University's Social Research Centre for Beyond Blue. The survey, which commenced in 2022, is conducted every two years.

As a barometer on the mental health and wellbeing of the nation, the data shows:

- Half of Australians (50%) reported recent symptoms of anxiety or depression, a steady increase from 2022 (46%) and broadly consistent with 2024 (49%).
- Cost of living remains a leading driver of distress for 47% of Australians, a steady rise from 2024 (44%) and 2022 (37%).
- Nearly three in four (72%) reported they can adapt when change occurs, while 71% said they can bounce back from challenges (down slightly from 74% in 2022).
- One in fourteen people (7%) said they use generative AI instead of seeking professional support. However, the research also found most Australians (86%) are concerned about the technology's accuracy, reliability, empathy, and the risk of harmful information.

"Australians are facing mounting pressures and distress persists, yet people remain able to adapt, and more are getting support for their mental health and wellbeing, before things get worse," Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO said.



"This is a good thing. It tells us that even in the face of significant challenges and division, we are a capable, resourceful nation of people. People can and are supporting each other."

"The report also tells us that Australians aren't simply enduring the mounting pressures; more are taking action to protect their mental health and the mental health of others."

"But the findings reinforce the need for continued focus on system reform and a shift in investment towards prevention and earlier support for mental health and wellbeing," Ms Harman added.

For the first time, the survey asked Australians about their use of generative AI as a source of mental health advice, support and as a source of information. Use was more common among young people and while many noted concerns about accuracy and unintended harms, they were drawn to the technology for its convenience.

"The explosive growth in the use of generative artificial intelligence for mental health advice and support reinforces the urgent need for appropriate guardrails. It also highlights unmet need in the community and an opportunity to consider how emerging technologies can help people access the right support earlier," said Ms Harman.

*To read the full report: **Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check – Trends in mental health and support seeking in 2026**, visit: <https://resources.beyondblue.org.au/beyond-blue-population-level-survey-2026>*

If you or someone you know is struggling, 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.

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Available for interview, photo or filming opportunities, please contact: media@beyondblue.org.au

- Beyond Blue CEO, Georgie Harman AO
- Lived experience case studies

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**

The Australian Mental Health and Wellbeing survey is conducted by the Social Research Centre (SRC) on behalf of Beyond Blue as a representative survey of the Australian population on mental health.

This report provides results from the 2026 survey (conducted in May 2026), with comparison to the 2024 and 2022 waves of the survey where appropriate. A sample of 5,146 adults aged 18 years and older completed the survey in 2026.



The survey was undertaken on the Social Research Centre's probability-based online panel, Life in Australia™. Life in Australia™ is Australia's most methodologically rigorous online panel. It exclusively uses random probability-based sampling methods. Results from Life in Australia™ are generalisable to the Australian population.