



## COVID-19 Response – Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service

The Australian Government is investing in ongoing mental health support for Australians affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through a further \$7.1 million in funding towards Beyond Blue’s Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service.

This funding is in addition to the Government’s investment of \$10 million over 2019–20 and 2020–21, and will ensure the program remains accessible until 31 December 2021, providing continued support while COVID-19 continues to impact Australians.

The Support Service offers early intervention care to minimise the impact of high levels of mental distress, preventing more serious mental illness and reducing the burden on acute services.

### Why is this important?

Beyond Blue has provided dedicated and targeted mental health support to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, including self-help tools, 24/7 professional mental health counselling, assistance to find and navigate mental health services, and a web chat service.

The Support Service has engaged with Australians on more than 60,000 occasions since April 2020, with depression and anxiety the most frequently cited reason for contact. Family and relationships have also been a significant reason for people aged 35-54 reaching out for support.

From early-July 2020 to mid-April 2021, 26.2% of contacts have been from regional or low population growth metropolitan areas.

The Support Service is also helping to measure the impact of the pandemic on mental health by providing de-identified data and insights on a regular basis to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

### Who will benefit?

This measure supports individuals, families and communities across Australia impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and those experiencing anxiety and concerns about the impact COVID-19 may have on their everyday lives.

In providing these services, Beyond Blue is also reducing the burden on other, acute mental health services, and on health professionals including general practitioners, and allied health professionals.

### How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$7.1 million over 2 years (2020–21 and 2021–22).