



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **LIFELINE & BEYOND BLUE LINK UP TO SUPPORT MORE AUSTRALIANS**

Lifeline and Beyond Blue are linking up under a new partnership to make it easier and more efficient for people to find the support that best suits them.

As community demand for mental health and crisis support rises and resources become increasingly tight, Lifeline and Beyond Blue have designed their new strategic directions to be complementary.

Lifeline will focus on crisis support and suicide prevention and Beyond Blue will focus on prevention and earlier intervention, supporting people at the first sign of struggle.

Together, the organisations support millions of people a year with information, advice, online self-help and referrals via telephone, text, webchat and digital platforms.

Beyond Blue Chair The Hon Julia Gillard AC said: "Australia's mental health and suicide prevention systems are too often crisis-driven. People often only get support when they're at breaking point. Now, in a deliberate step, Beyond Blue will sharpen our focus so we're supporting people early on – helping people to feel better sooner, to get well and to stay well."

"Of course, both Lifeline and Beyond Blue will always be equipped to provide support to all Australians, no matter the nature of their distress," she said.

Lifeline Australia Chair Jacinta Munro said: "Lifeline will continue to focus on crisis support and suicide prevention, supporting Australians in times of crisis and equipping individuals and communities to be suicide safe."

"Governments are increasingly recognising the importance of better integration within the mental health and wellbeing sector, and achieving this requires leadership from both governments and sector organisations.

"This partnership between Lifeline and Beyond Blue helps to deliver a more integrated system, with more clarity for help seekers, smoother transitions between services and a greater focus on holistic support."

Earlier this year, the organisations formalised a three-year collaboration agreement that will build on their long record of working together in operations and advocacy.

This year, the Victorian Government engaged Lifeline and Beyond Blue to lead the first stage of a sector-wide co-design to deliver on a Victorian Royal Commission recommendation to create better referral pathways across the state's helplines.

Beyond Blue and Lifeline worked closely during the Black Saturday bushfires and the height of the pandemic, including by linking young people to Lifeline's crisis text service from the Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service delivered by Beyond Blue.

Now official, the partnership means Lifeline and Beyond Blue will be better placed to share resources and connect people with the information, advice and support that suits them best, regardless of where their journey begins.

Ms Gillard said: "Beyond Blue will continue to focus on depression and anxiety, equipping people to look after their mental health and connecting them with support options at the first sign of struggle."

Ms Munro said: "Working together benefits every help seeker. This partnership means we will reduce confusion about what we do and take a significant step towards a more connected system."

As a tangible example of the partnership, Beyond Blue will transfer to Lifeline ownership of its popular suicide safety planning tool Beyond Now, which has supported hundreds of thousands of people to stay safe during a suicide crisis since its creation in 2016. In the past four years alone, more than 400,000 people have used the app with more than 150,000 safety plans made.

Ms Munro said: "Lifeline crisis supporters have been recommending this app to help seekers for several years and so we're thrilled to take responsibility for its management and development going forward."

Ms Gillard said: "Beyond Blue has a proud record in suicide prevention, having developed and scaled Beyond Now and the foundational suicide aftercare model known as The Way Back Support Service."

"As Beyond Blue shifts our suicide prevention focus upstream from service delivery to address the issues and circumstances that contribute to suicidal distress, the transition of Beyond Now to our friends at Lifeline means this vital asset will continue to be there for the community," she said.

"We believe this partnership signals a new way forward, focused on community impact, working together so people can navigate our services with greater ease and clarity."