

National Mental Health Month 2021

POST-EVENT REPORT



NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH
MONTH 2021

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MENTAL HEALTH: POST PANDEMIC RECOVERY CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE





MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION
AUSTRALIA ACKNOWLEDGES THAT
OUR HEAD OFFICE IS LOCATED ON THE
TRADITIONAL LANDS OF THE KULIN
NATIONS AND WE PAY OUR RESPECTS
TO THEIR ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND
EMERGING. WE EXTEND THIS RESPECT
TO ALL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PEOPLES.



**“MAKE YOUR
MENTAL
HEALTH A
PRIORITY”**



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A YEAR IN REVIEW

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021



Activities

Almost \$1M

donated through fundraising, partnerships, and general donations.

5000 attendees joined the nationwide events both in-person and virtually

Ambassadors, Future Leaders and Speakers shared their stories in 60 events reaching to over **900,000** people across the month

More than **500,000** walked for mental health, with 224 fundraisers and over 1,881 kms covered.



Reach

23,000

users visited the website to seek information about National Mental Health Month 2021

Majority of content viewers were aged between **25 - 34** greater user base in **Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland**

World Mental Health Day Appeal and Summit reached out to over **400,000** people across Australia

We reached out to more than 1 million Australians who joined us towards the road to recovery and fostering resilience. **#ResilienceandRecovery**



1,078,394
Australians



Engagement

50,000+
contacts across so-
cial media channels
and Mailerlite

Facebook and
Instagram posts and
videos reached out to
**more than
half a
million**

135,354
have accessed
e-newsletters and
event campaigns

National Mental
Health Month
Wellbeing calendar
and tips were a huge
success reaching
60,000 people.

FOREWORD



2021 was a busy and successful year for the Mental Health Foundation Australia, with many positive outcomes towards attaining better mental health for all. Being the coordinator for National Mental Health Month (NMHM) 2021, I intended to promote more significant mental health awareness, particularly with the widespread mental health impacts posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

During this National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign, the Foundation organised numerous events across Australia, focusing on many different aspects of mental health. To facilitate this task, the Foundation implemented in 2018, our Australian Multicultural Ambassador, Australian Youth Ambassador, and Australian Future Leader programs, comprising of a dedicated network of volunteers across the country, with the aim to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues within these communities and generally within the Australian community. This year, our 300 Ambassadors nationwide (180 in 2019) played a massive role in the success of each event during the month. We are thankful to many multicultural communities who participated throughout Australia in our mission to provide 'better mental health for all.'

The theme for this year's National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign was 'Mental Health: Post Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience.' Every industry has faced, and many are still facing

unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This year's focus was on raising awareness about mental health in various industries. This theme encapsulates and highlights the gravity of the topic of mental health and how important it is to address in the Australian community, especially as a step towards Post-pandemic Recovery and Resilience. With this theme in mind, we aimed to extend our campaign even wider than previous years, with events planned to embrace many different community groups and people of all ages walking on the road to recovery and fostering resilience; #ResilienceAndRecovery.

Overall, we were able to reach more than 900,000 Australians throughout National Mental Health Month 2021, joining us on the road towards recovery and fostering resilience. We successfully integrated the month's theme of 'Mental Health: Post-Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience' in all of our events, focussing on just how crucial it is to discuss mental ill-health and its impact as a shadow pandemic.

This year, for the first time we formally launched the proceedings of National Mental Health Month in each capital city across Australia, some in-person and some virtual with a total reach of 100,000 people who supported us through our social media platforms.

On the special occasion of World Mental Health Day on 10th October, we launched a special pilot initiative – Mental Health Appeal. All of the funds raised towards developing a strength-based youth mental health and



wellbeing and suicide prevention program. The initiative was quite successful through media channels connecting more than 400,000 people on the same day. On this day, we also hosted our first virtual World Mental Health Day Summit, bringing together world-renowned researchers who discussed the impacts of COVID-19 – another grand success.

Mental Health is a priority throughout the world, and due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it has come even more so to the forefront around the globe. On World Mental Health Day this year, the MHFA organised an International World Mental Health Day Summit, where people had the opportunity to hear from, and interact with leading researchers and professionals within the mental health sector. The summit was enormously well received worldwide.

Like previous years, a key event of NMHM was the Walk for Mental Health, which last year in Victoria saw a turnout of 12,000 at Albert Park Lake. This year, the Foundation truly had a national presence with walks organised in each state and territory of Australia on the same day and time; 17th October, 10:30 am. We also had the option of a virtual walk, with the launch of our MHFA's App and dedicated walk website. Reach out on the day of the walk alone was to 500,000 Australians! We thank and appreciate all ambassadors and volunteers in each state for their efforts.

I want to thank the Vice-Chairperson of the MHFA, Mr Jim Goodin and our hardworking staff and volunteers for the magnitude of their efforts contributing to the success of

NMHM 2021. A special thank you to our manager, Ms Aisha Usman, for her hard work, commitment and complete support to the NMHM campaign. I thank our Board of Directors and Scientific Advisors for their continuous guidance and support. A big thank you to our major sponsors, Chemists Own and Australian Unity and all supporting organisations. I also appreciate the support of our local, state and federal parliamentarians, our partner organisations and all other stakeholders who continue to support the MHFA's work.

The MHFA will continue to aim for better mental health for all Australians, with a bigger and better National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign in 2022 and beyond.



Vasan Srinivasan

Chairperson of MHFA,
Board Co-ordinator of NMHM

Acknowledgments

This year's National Mental Health Month 2021 was a huge success. In the time of COVID, the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) adopted many challenges and is proud to have been resilient in the face of these hurdles. Our National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign was an effective step towards getting Australians back on track with their mental health during this challenging time. With this in mind, we aimed to extend our campaign even wider than previous years, with events planned to embrace many different community groups and people of all ages to promote #ResilienceandRecovery.

On behalf of the Mental Health Foundation Australia, I acknowledge each individual involved in the proceedings of this month. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to the Victorian Government, Queensland Government and South Australian government for supporting NMHM 2021 events. MHFA is grateful to Australian Unity and Chemists Own for sponsoring National Mental Health Month 2021 but also for their participation and support to many events during the month. I also thank Maurice Blackburn for their generous donation towards the Mental Health Appeal; Pharmacist Support Services and Pharmacy Guild of Australia for sponsoring the Pharmacist's Mental Health Symposium; Relationship Australia for sponsoring our Walk for Mental Health and Infosys for sponsoring NMHM events.

This year, Mental Health Foundation Australia is proud to partner with Australian technology business DB Results and take up the wellbeing app MiOK, to support our members, enabling individuals to regularly check-in on a private and secure platform and ask the question 'Am I OK?' MiOK also alerts the user when it's time to seek outside help. We thank DB Results for this opportunity to promote wellbeing and early intervention.

We thank Foot Solutions Australia for supporting National Mental Health Month 2021. Through their financial contributions towards the COVID-19 Meal Delivery Initiative, the MHFA has been able to deliver 85,000 meals during COVID-19 to those in need.

I also acknowledge and thank each dignitary who took the time to participate in our events, and for being a part of our campaign for this year. Your presence was truly appreciated, and we look forward to working with you for many years to come.

This project has been made possible with the support and vision of MHFA leadership. I am particularly grateful to Mr Vasanth Srinivasan, Chairperson and Coordinator of National Mental Health Month for his planning, dedication and hard work in making this project a success. I am also grateful to Mr Jim Goodin, Vice-Chairperson for his unwavering support and enthusiasm.





I am grateful to all MHFA Board Directors for providing their support and assistance at all stages of NMHM planning, promotion and implementation. Mental Health Foundation Australia also acknowledges our Multicultural Ambassadors, Youth Ambassadors, Future Leaders, Support Groups facilitators and MHFA volunteers who provided their invaluable input in the implementation of NMHM 2021.

The Foundation acknowledges the assistance and hard work of all staff; Aneka Srinivasan, Nithya Viswanathan, Akshay Subramanian, Felicity Mackin, Ritika Purang, Kelly Sims, Preethi Selvaraj, Jael Wong, Vipul Verma, Adam Goh, Susan Warby and Priyanka Ananthakrishna.

I would like to thank our graphic designer Lubna Irfan, Finance Officer Edith Tonge, Virtual support Charles Walker, Entertainment partner Bollywood Dance School Australia and other stakeholders and participants who supported us in making NMHM 2021 a huge success!

National Mental Health Month represents a partnership between Mental Health Foundation Australia and the many mental health services, non-government organisations, local government councils in Australia, libraries, and educational institutions who commit to holding National Mental Health Month events in their communities, schools, and/or workplaces. As always, it was a privilege to work

with these dedicated and creative people carrying out this work at a national level in 2021.

I look forward to your attendance at and participation in National Mental Health Month 2022!



Aisha Usman

Manager

Mental Health Foundation Australia

Executive Summary

National Mental Health Month is an important reminder to all Australians that we need to raise much-needed awareness about mental health, and to promote wellbeing in our communities.

National Mental Health Month is a program that the MHFA is extremely proud of, and we intend to reach out to and educate as many Australians as possible, to help reduce stigma and facilitate positive and non-judgemental discussion surrounding the important topic of mental health in Australia. With one in five Australians experiencing a mental health illness, it is time we give mental health due attention, and that is exactly what the MHFA is wanting to achieve.

The theme for this year's National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign was 'Mental Health: Post-Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience.' Every industry has faced, and many are still facing unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's focus was to raise awareness about mental health in various industries. This theme encapsulates and highlights the gravity of the topic of mental health, and how important it is to address in the Australian community, especially as a step towards Post-Pandemic Recovery and Resilience. With this theme in mind, MHFA aimed to extend the campaign even wider than previous years, with events planned to embrace many different community groups and people of all ages walking on the road to recovery and fostering resilience; #ResilienceAndRecovery.

This year, the Foundation has organised various events across Australia from the 1st to the 31st of October. During this month, various activities were organised, including a national launch in each state and territory capital on the 1st of October. Other events across the month were the Walk for Mental Health, various mental health symposiums, youth events, multicultural events, webinars on different topics, a World Mental Health Day Summit, and other

interesting and exciting events. National Mental Health Month 2021 consisted of a plethora of events across Australia to attract as many individuals to get involved as possible. The Foundation believes with each year, our work can raise more mental health awareness and advocate for reducing the prevalence of debilitating mental health illnesses many Australians struggle with. All events were accessible virtually, this allowed us to reach all 537 councils Australia-wide and estimate our reach extended to over 10 million Australians.

With support from the State Government and our many sponsors and supporters, the Mental Health Foundation Australia was able to run National Mental Health Month in the face of COVID-19 successfully.

The Foundation has continued its multicultural Ambassadors, Youth Ambassadors, and Future Leaders Programs to facilitate this major campaign task. This allowed extensive reach out to many communities across Australia to promote better mental health for all.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH AMBASSADORS

The NMHM campaign involves extensive planning. Our MHFA Youth Ambassadors (MHFA YA) program of 2019 was expanded and developed into the Australian Youth Ambassador Program in 2020, a nationwide cohort of young people advising and assisting the MHFA advisory Board about essential issues relating to youth mental health.

The intention was to reach out to approximately 450,000 students (including overseas) from 14 universities in Victoria, nearly 200,000 students from 14 TAFE colleges, and about 970,000 students from 2,200 schools (1,531 Government schools, 494 Catholic schools, 219 Independent schools, including 107 Special schools) throughout Australia.



Across ten months of preparation, the Foundation wrote to each school, TAFE, and University to create and promote mental health and well-being-related programs for students and youth. A group of 45 youth ambassadors nationwide was formed.

A successful Youth Mental Health Forum, Youth Suicide Prevention Forum and a Youth Panel Discussion of Integrated Mental Health Hubs would not have been possible without the support and contribution of the MHFA Australian Youth Ambassadors.

These successful events attracted many mental health professionals, teachers, principals, parents and young people from various universities, TAFE colleges, and senior secondary colleges. With thousands of individuals choosing to view the recorded events online currently on YouTube.

MHFA AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURAL AMBASSADORS

This year, the Foundation further expanded the MHFA Multicultural Ambassadors (MHFA MCA) program into every state establishing a group of 309 MHFA Australian Multicultural Ambassadors from leaders representing Australia's over 200 different language groups. Our Multicultural Ambassadors reflect the changes currently restructuring Australia's population demographics and demanding complex mental health responses. They ranged from professionals, doctors, and students, leaders, consumers, carers and businesspeople, who have demonstrated a commitment to their community and were selected for the influence and impact they are having on Australians in their community.

The MHFA ambassadors' role was to connect the MHFA Board and staff with their communities and promote MHFA activities as a vehicle for engagement and inclusion

to reach out to 7,000,000 Australians born overseas [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/2017/Census_Data_2018]. The program aimed to provide community leaders with an official platform to become involved in introducing and coordinating mental health-related programs in their communities and opportunities for professional development.

AUSTRALIAN FUTURE LEADERS

The Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) established the MHFA Future Leaders Program (MFLP) in 2019. The purpose of the MFLP is to help promote the message of 'better mental health for all' within participating student's school communities through partaking in Mental Health Month 2021 and assisting to promote better mental health amongst their peers. The program was open to all Australians aged 12-19 years of age aimed primarily at high school students to help them make a change within the school community. This year, a group of 42 MHFA Future Leaders joined and participated in various activities throughout the month to promote students' mental health and wellbeing.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS IN AUSTRALIA

Local governments play an essential role in the lives of citizens in all states and territories in Australia. The Foundation approached Mayors and Councillors from the 537 local government areas Australia-wide, and these mayors and councillors were successful in developing strategies to address local issues relating to mental health for a national local government position. The MHFA used this advice to ensure it addressed issues that were most relevant to ratepayers whilst still representing a variety of mental health issues during NMHM.

The success of our NMHM campaign allowed the Mental Health Foundation Australia to establish key networks and relationships with local governments on dealing with the Mental Health issues in their region, informing the MHFA and thus ensuring the success of NMHM 2021 events.

MENTAL HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

The National Mental Health Month was intended to bring together Mental Health Organizations in Australia, to take the opportunity to promote mental health education, training, support information, programs and services delivered by their organisation to the community.

Many national and state-wide mental health organisations participated in this campaign throughout the month including, Australian Unity, Chemist's Own, Foot Solutions, Remedy Healthcare, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, EACH, Mindful Healing Toolkit, Whole Food Nutrition, Grow Australia, The Cairnmillar Institute and Mind Australia.

CULTURAL MUSIC AND DANCE

The Foundation intended to bring together various multicultural communities and other cultural organisations to raise awareness, participate, and promote positive Mental Health through cultural events. The aim was to bring communities together which would lay a platform for better mental health for youth and new immigrants.

Various communities from South East Asian Countries such as India, Sri Lanka, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, Singapore, Turkey and Vietnam; European Nations such as Croatia, Germany, Serbia, Italy, and Greece; and other countries such as Africa, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe contributed to planning events throughout the month and ensured that awareness was spread to the 1,800,000 people from different ethnic backgrounds. The Foundation planned a Multicultural Gala Dinner in Queensland, which was a success.

THE REACH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

It has been recognised that Mental Health Month 2021 would have a high degree of influence on the Australian community due to the strategic and cooperative interaction between diverse groups, government and organisations. Our expected reach of more than 10 million Australians was achieved by our current partnerships with the following groups, as well as our active community contact and communication strategy:

- Five hundred forty-seven local government councils were invited to attend National Mental Health Month events. Prior to events becoming virtual due to COVID-19 restrictions, 8 Councils were targeted to host Mental Health Month forums. This represents a total rate-payer representation of over 15 million Australians.
- 309 'Multicultural Ambassadors' linked to 3,000 ethnic community groups with a combined membership closer to 800,000.
- All 128 Victorian parliamentarians and 226 Federal parliamentarians were targeted through our Advocacy channels, reminding them of the importance of mental health in the community. Other vital partnerships exist between the Mental Health Foundation Australia and the following: Swinburne University, Commonwealth Bank Australia, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Chemists Own, Australian Unity, Fitness Australia, Foot Solutions and many more.
- Our team initiated many event-based partnerships with industry associations, unions, businesses and universities to ensure we best represent and appeal to our target demographics.

The Mental Health Foundation Australia believes the positive promotional potential of these established and developing networks was immense.





National Mental Health Month 2021

ABOUT NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH:

National Mental Health Month (NMHM) is an initiative of the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) to advocate for and raise awareness of Australian mental health. It is an important time where the Australian community comes together to raise awareness.

The NMHM is unlike many other mental health awareness campaigns. It is a program that the MHFA is extremely proud of, and we intend to reach out to and educate as many Australians as possible, to help reduce stigma and facilitate positive and non-judgemental discussion surrounding the important topic of mental health in Australia. With one in five Australians experiencing a mental health illness, it is time we give mental health due attention, and that is exactly what the MHFA is wanting to achieve.

Throughout this month, many events have been organised in each state of Australia to attract and unite Australians of all ages and backgrounds to raise awareness of mental health for all.





AIM

The aim of the National Mental Health Month 2021 project was to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing by expanding the reach of the Foundation nationally. The Foundation was aiming to reach a potential audience of 9 million Australians.

PURPOSE

- To activate, educate and engage Australians about mental health and wellbeing through a month of interactive events across the country by exercising the MHFA framework
- To further fight mental health related stigma
- To engage local, state and federal government to create more awareness and advise all levels of government of what needs to change in the area of mental health
- To plan a white paper document at the end of National Mental Health Month 2021 to deepen our understanding of the importance of mental wellbeing in the general Australian community as well as in CALD communities
- To strengthen the mental health scene in Australia, by collaborating with all mental health organisations
- To help assign more funding towards mental health initiatives, support services and awareness campaigns in Australia



OBJECTIVES

- To promote mental health and **increase public awareness** of mental illness
- To develop and deliver mental health **education programs** to support Australians of all ages
- To allow engagement in activities aiming to promote a positive attitude towards mental health and the **importance of a healthy lifestyle**
- To provide **support services**, educational material and resources to Australians experiencing not only mental health struggles but also their families, friends and anyone wanting to learn more about mental health
- To provide opportunities for overt **discussion about the status of mental health services** in Australia and the improvements that are required
- To engage Australians through ventures such as the Creative Writers Competition and Consumer Arts Competition to facilitate discussion of mental health in various ways
- To collaborate and liaise with and **make submissions to all levels of Government** and councils for the best possible achievable outcome of National Mental Health Month 2021
- To **communicate with Australians** regularly regarding National Mental Health Month 2021 to allow for greater reach
- To incorporate the theme of **Mental Health: Post-Pandemic Recovery, Resilience and Challenges** in all of our events during National Mental Health Month 2021

OUTCOME

- National Mental Health Month 2021 was a huge success
- Mental Health was promoted through National Mental Health Walks; National Mental Health Month launches; National Symposiums, Mental Health Forums; Youth events, Multicultural events, and Wellness events
- The National Mental Health Month Symposium series was an overwhelming success. The Mental Health Foundation Australia was fortunate to host a symposium in every State in Australia, virtually and physically. Many symposiums were launched by Federal and/or State ministers and was well attended both in-person and virtually by



Federal/State Members of Parliament, consumers, MHFA Board Directors, industry associations, the business community and multicultural and youth ambassadors

- Increase in Local, State and Federal Government's participation
- Increase in Multicultural and Indigenous communities participation
- The Foundation's National Mental Health Month Webinars addressed mental health issues amongst youth, seniors and multicultural communities and were attended by people from the general and professional community nationwide
- Increase in involvement from target audiences
- People are more confident to help and support their own and others' mental health and wellbeing
- Our Walks for Mental Health were held in every Capital City around Australia. It turned out to be a huge success, attracting more than 500,000 people of all ages
- Increased funding to provide information, education, and support to consumers and carers affected by mental health issues
- The Foundation shared free online educational material throughout Australia. Moreover, the material was provided at the NMHM events. Various Mental Health Organisations also participated in providing resources and informational material.
- Our National Multicultural Mind Hotline remained active and operational during NMHM
- Australian schools and universities were involved in various activities to discuss positive mental health and wellbeing. The Young Creative Writers Competition was held to provide students with an opportunity to express the importance of positive mental health and resilience through writing
- Mental health consumers were encouraged to participate in an Art Competition to portray post-pandemic recovery. 39 contestants from Victoria participated in the competition.
- Media engagement through various platforms such as television, radio, newspapers, e-newsletters and social media.
- Daily social media updates occurred regularly on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Mailerlite and LinkedIn.

National Mental Health Month Planning

National Mental Health Month involved extensive planning. With the success of National Mental Health Month in 2020, the Foundation focused on further expanding the campaign to include more events in every state and territory. Several activities were planned to raise awareness of mental health and well-being among Australians to remove its stigma.

With 2021 being particularly hard on the mental health of Australians in midst of COVID-19, we believed that National Mental Health Month could be a practical step towards getting Australians back on track with their mental health.

Throughout this month, the Foundation organised numerous events across Australia, focusing on many different aspects of mental health. The Foundation further expanded the MHFA Multicultural Ambassadors, MHFA Youth Ambassadors, and MHFA Future Leaders programs to facilitate this task. These programs comprise of a network of volunteers dedicated to reducing the stigma around mental health within culturally and linguistically diverse communities and in other communities across Australia.

The major highlight of this year's NMHM was the National Walk for Mental Health organised across all states and territories on the same day and at the same time, 17th October at 10:30 am. We anticipated this to be the most successful event during National Mental Health Month, providing the opportunity to reach out to many Australians of many cultural backgrounds.



Mental Health Appeal

For the first time in the Australia's history, MHFA launched our very own National Mental Health Appeal!

This was a milestone for the MHFA, and on the 10th of October every year, beginning this year in 2021, we hope to make this a capstone event. The 10th of October holds much significance, coined as World Mental Health Day, so we found no day better to host this important initiative.

This year, we raised funds to develop an evidence-based training program/module specific to positive and strength-based youth mental health and well-being promotion, and suicide prevention primarily aimed at promoting life and safety in young people (Tonge, Brereton & Fraser, 2021).

Through evidence based psychological principles, primarily those based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), the program would teach young people about:

- Life, hope and the future
- How to get help and a way forward
- Positive solutions
- Safe outcomes
- Relationships
- Loving and being loved
- Giving and receiving kindness
- Purpose and fulfilment
- Care of self, others, and the environment

The programs aims to promote the much-needed awareness and skills required by youth and their families to care for their mental health and well-being, and to stay safe.

The appeal was highly successful through media channels connecting more than 400,000 people on the same day. A custom fundraising website was created for our major campaign – Mental Health Appeal, www.mentalhealthappeal.org.au

Through the appeal, we raised \$54,228 with over 40 fundraising individuals and teams with an average donation amount of \$951.37.



Theme

The theme for this year's National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign was **Mental Health: Post-Pandemic Recovery, Resilience and Challenges**. This theme encapsulated and highlighted the gravity of the topic of mental health, and how important it is to address in the Australian community. With this theme in mind, we aimed to extend our campaign even wider than previous years, with events planned to embrace many different community groups and people of all ages to raise awareness of **#ResilienceandRecovery**.

Flyers

This year, separate flyers were produced to promote each event. The Foundation received very positive feedback on these flyers. These flyers were distributed predominantly through Mailerlite and social media to all MHFA contacts. The Foundation acknowledges the excellent graphic designing services provided by Lubna Irfan of Zoraiz Studios in October. The poster and the NMHM events calendar were electronically sent to all of our contacts, shared on social media and it was available to download and print off of our website.

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021



MENTAL HEALTH: POST PANDEMIC RECOVERY CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE



1st - 31st
October
2021



NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH
MONTH 2021

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Marketing, media, and promotion

The Foundation took various marketing initiatives to promote this year's National Mental Health Month.

1. NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH POSTER

The National Mental Health Month poster serves as a reminder and education tool to promote positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience and highlight the issues of mental illness and the ongoing need to de-stigmatise mental disorders.

This year, the poster image was taken from the the winning piece of the Consumer Arts Competition by Lee Ruth Hirsh, 'Finding your Voice.'

The poster was distributed widely throughout Australia in October. The poster and the NMHM events calendar were electronically sent to all of our contacts, shared on social media and it was available to download and print off of our website.



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 1 - 31 October 2021



NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH
MONTH 2021



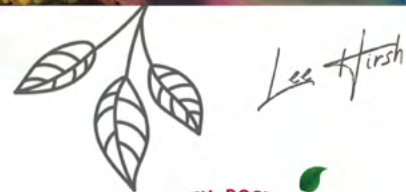
Theme:
**Mental Health: Post Pandemic
Recovery Challenges and Resilience**

Winner of National Mental Health Month
Consumer Art Competition:
Lee Hirsh Title: Finding your Voice by Lee Hirsh

For more information about National Mental Health Month,
contact the Mental Health Foundation Australia.

Ph: 1300 MHF AUS (643 287)
WWW.MHFA.ORG.AU

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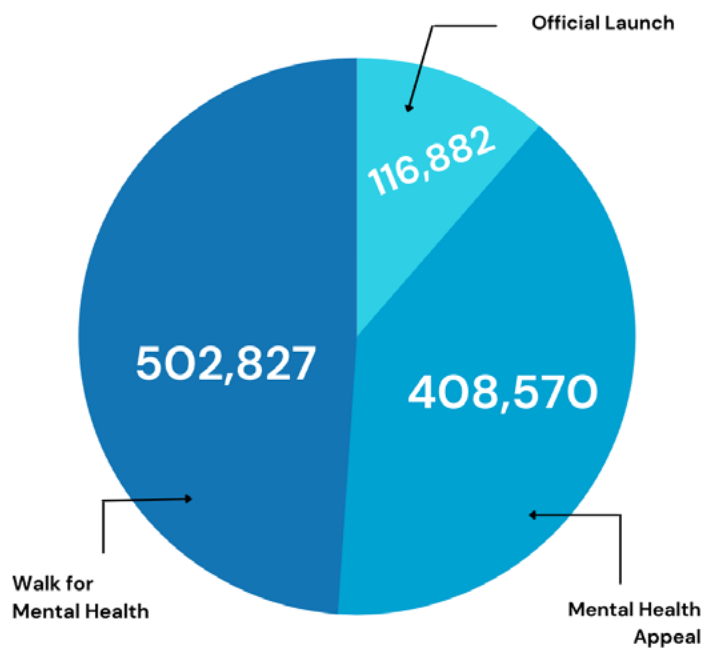
2. SOCIAL MEDIA

Mental Health Foundation Australia's social media growth during the National Mental Health Month was outstanding and helped spread awareness faster and easier with carefully curated content. With the hashtags #NMHM2021 and #ResilienceandRecovery, conversations around mental health, the MHFA events and updates were easily shared amongst the community.

Our presence on Facebook provides major exposure of the MHFA and National Mental Health Month more generally. Events and current happenings of interest to professionals and consumers are constantly posted and attracted considerable attention as well as registrations.

Videos and IGTV's have been added to the MHFA brand as they highlight more content than just a simple photo. Our most successful social media campaign this October has to be the Walk for Mental Health. This campaign leading up to the day, during the day, and post-event, has managed to accrue 80,000+ engagements throughout our Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn communities. With animated content, images, videos, publications, and quotes, our Walk for Mental Health was successful. The Foundation acknowledges our excellent media team, Nithya Viswanathan, Jael Wong and Adam Goh.

National Mental Health Month 2021 | Major campaigns reach



3. NMHM EVENTS LISTING

NMHM organisers around the country were able to register and describe their events for publicity on the mhfa.org.au website via the NMHM interactive calendar. The calendar allowed attendees to directly access event registration pages by clicking on a selected date.

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

CALENDAR

Theme
Mental Health: Post Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience

1 OCTOBER - NATIONAL LAUNCH OF MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

VIRTUAL VICTORIA 4:30pm - 8:30pm Virtual	VIRTUAL NEW SOUTH WALES 6:30pm - 8:30pm Virtual	QUEENSLAND 6:30pm - 8:30pm Queensland Parliament, Brisbane	WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6:30pm - 8:30pm Perth Convention Centre, Perth	NORTHERN TERRITORY 6:30pm - 8:30pm Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, Darwin	SOUTH AUSTRALIA 11:30am - 12:30pm Parliament House, Adelaide	TASMANIA 6:30pm - 8:30pm Robert Gordon and Conference Centre, Hobart	VIRTUAL AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY 6:30pm - 8:30pm Virtual
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2 OCTOBER **3 OCTOBER** **4 OCTOBER** **5 OCTOBER** **6 OCTOBER** **7 OCTOBER** **8 OCTOBER** **9 OCTOBER** **10 OCTOBER**

VIRTUAL Move It 4 Kids 10:00am - 11:00am Virtual	VIRTUAL Sound Meditation 9:00am - 10:00am Virtual	Multicultural and Refugees' Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm Darwin Convention Centre	Childcare and Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm Brisbane City Hall	VIRTUAL Legal Professionals Mental Health Forum 10:00am - 12:00pm Virtual	VIRTUAL Youth Mental Health Forum 6:30pm - 8:00pm	VIRTUAL Medical Professionals' Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm Virtual	VIRTUAL Mental Health Wellness Workshops 4:00pm - 5:15pm	VIRTUAL World Mental Health Day Summit 9:00am - 5:00pm
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11 OCTOBER **12 OCTOBER** **13 OCTOBER** **14 OCTOBER** **15 OCTOBER** **16 OCTOBER**

VIRTUAL Construction and Mental Health Symposium 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	VIRTUAL Mental Health Expo 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	VIRTUAL Miners' Mental Health Symposium 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Perth Convention Centre	VIRTUAL Crime and Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm Robert Gordon & Conference Centre	VIRTUAL Carers' Mental Health Forum 1:00pm - 3:00pm	VIRTUAL Truck Drivers' Mental Health Forum 10:00am - 11:30am
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17 OCTOBER - NATIONAL WALK FOR MENTAL HEALTH

VICTORIA 10:30am - 12:30pm Virtual	NEW SOUTH WALES 10:30am - 12:30pm Virtual	QUEENSLAND 10:30am - 12:30pm City Square Gardens	WESTERN AUSTRALIA 10:30am - 12:30pm Perry Lakes Reserve	NORTHERN TERRITORY 10:30am - 12:30pm George Brown Square Brisbane Gardens	SOUTH AUSTRALIA 10:30am - 12:30pm Red Gum (Marine/Viral) Park	TASMANIA 10:30am - 12:30pm Mar's Infinity Loop	AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY 10:30am - 12:30pm Virtual
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Scan the QR code to register for events

18 OCTOBER **19 OCTOBER** **20 OCTOBER** **21 OCTOBER** **22 OCTOBER** **23 OCTOBER** **24 OCTOBER** **25 OCTOBER** **26 OCTOBER** **27 OCTOBER**

VIRTUAL Youth Suicide Prevention Forum 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	VIRTUAL Universities and Mental Health Forum 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	VIRTUAL Police Personnel' Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm	Sports and Mental Health Forum 10:00am - 12:00pm Brisbane City Hall	Symposium on the Mental Health of Mental Health Professionals' 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Perth Convention Centre	VIRTUAL Paramedics' Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm	VIRTUAL Parenting and Mental Health Forum 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	VIRTUAL Pharmacists' Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm	VIRTUAL Food and Mood Forum 10:00am - 12:00pm Virtual	VIRTUAL Finance Professionals' Mental Health Symposium 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Virtual
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28 OCTOBER **29 OCTOBER** **30 OCTOBER** **31 OCTOBER**

Mental Health Symposium on Post Pandemic Recovery Challenges, Resilience & Religion 10:00am - 12:00pm Adelaide Town Hall	Defence and Mental Health Symposium 10:00am - 12:00pm Brisbane Town Hall	VIRTUAL Future Leaders' Forum 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm	VIRTUAL Seniors' Mental Health Forum 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
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MHFA Gala Dinner - Queensland 6:30pm	National Mental Health 2021 Closing Ceremony 2:30pm - 4:00pm	VIRTUAL Indigenous Mental Health Symposium 1:00pm - 3:00pm Virtual	VIRTUAL LGBTIQ+ Mental Health Forum 1:00pm - 3:00 pm Virtual
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1300 643 287
WWW.MHFA.ORG.AU

NMHM POST-EVENT REPORT 2021

27

4. MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING TIPS

The impacts of the current COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown, social distancing and isolation significantly impacted the mental health of many Australians. Therefore, on the 1st day of NMHM, MHFA officially launched a month long wellbeing tips calendar. The calendar reached out to over 60,000 people, several multicultural ambassadors, members and mental health organisations promoted the calendar widely. The daily tips had an average reach out of 1,500 - 3000 people on a daily basis.

OCTOBER 2021



**NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH
MONTH 2021**

WELLBEING CALENDAR

Make your mental health a priority



Your culture, your mind
Mental Health
Foundation Australia

<p>01</p>  <p>Look after your sleep hygiene</p>	<p>02</p>  <p>Practice meditation</p>	<p>03</p>  <p>Reframe negative thoughts</p>	<p>04</p>  <p>Accept your emotions</p>	<p>05</p>  <p>Confide in a friend</p>	<p>06</p>  <p>Go out for a walk</p>	<p>07</p>  <p>Set goals for the week</p>	<p>08</p>  <p>Practice journaling</p>
<p>09</p>  <p>Find a spot of sunshine to sit in</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>Do something for someone else</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Practice gratitude</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>Listen to music</p>	<p>13</p>  <p>Do something creative</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>List your strengths</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>Take a break from your devices</p>	<p>16</p>  <p>Set a hydration goal</p>
<p>17</p>  <p>Learn a new skill</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>Smile purposely</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>Practice mindfulness</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>Connect with supports</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>Cook a healthy meal</p>	<p>22</p>  <p>Learn a deep breathing exercise</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>Unfollow negative social media accounts</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>Practice progressive muscle relaxation</p>
<p>25</p>  <p>Take a bubble bath</p>	<p>26</p>  <p>Spend time with your pets</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>Practice forgiveness</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>Have a solo dance party</p>	<p>29</p>  <p>Declutter your space</p>	<p>30</p>  <p>Watch your favourite movie</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>Seek professional support</p>	

1300 643 287
WWW.MHFA.ORG.AU






6. RADIO AND TELEVISION

MHFA Board and Multicultural Ambassadors participated in various radio interviews during National Mental Health Month as a collaborative approach. Many radio stations invited MHFA for conversations about National Mental Health Month, including our walk for mental health in the Northern Territory, which was covered by the ABC. During NMHM 2021, the MHFA was successful in receiving some coverage on TV. Additionally, MHFA had a strategic partnership with local TV channels to promote NMHM events.



7. BILLBOARDS REACHOUT

The MHFA shared National Mental Health Month 2021, Walk for Mental Health and Mental Health Appeal posters on virtual billboards. These billboards were hugely successful and reached out to people across the nation to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and wellbeing.



COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS

1. AUSTRALIAN YOUNG WRITER'S CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

This year we had a rich and varied selection of students and schools entering the Australian Young Writers' Creative Writing Competition. We received 124 entries from schools across the nation, covering many mental health related topics.

The competition's three categories are Upper Primary from years 4-6, Lower secondary from years 7-9, and Upper Secondary from years 10-12. The winners were presented with prizes of \$100, \$125 & \$150 by MHFA Board Directors & Dignitaries in each state. The winners were:

VIC

- Upper Primary (Year 5-6) - Zac Palexas
- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Bronte Pringle
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Alyssa Wong

NSW

- Upper Primary (Year 5-6) - Kulmehar Sidhu
- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Kh Tasnim Hassan
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Charlotte Tan

QLD

- Upper Primary (Year 5-6) - Sofia Anna Cortenbach
- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Ruby Collins
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Lara Rackham

WA

- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Erin Johnson
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Stefi Susan Binu

SA

- Senior Secondary (10-12) - Jemimah Rose Hay

TAS

- Upper Primary (5-6) - Nina Hasdell

We congratulate all writers for their beautiful entries.





2. CONSUMER'S ART COMPETITION

The MHFA's Art competition supports community involvement of people living with mental illness. This year in February, the Foundation invited artists across Victoria to create an innovative piece of artwork that portrays an optimistic and positive image of mental health and post-pandemic recovery. Artists submitted up to two artworks as paintings, drawings, mosaics, photos, computerised images, sculptures and other art mediums. The artwork was judged on its suitability to be reproduced on a poster that will promote the National Mental Health Month Campaign for 2021.

The Foundation received 39 entries for the competition. Mr Jim Goodin, Vice-Chairperson of the Foundation and the MHFA's Multicultural Ambassadors judged the competition. The entries were narrowed down to the top 3 artworks. The winning image, was titled 'Finding your Voice' by Lee Ruth Hirsh, followed by Chloe Gonzalez, 'Covid won't knock me down' (2nd prize) and Hsin Lin, 'May Your Days Be Filled With Light - Flowering Gum' (3rd prize). Due to COVID-19 restrictions we were unable to organise an exhibition. We congratulate all artists for their wonderful entries. We would like to also recognise the creativity of the artwork - 'Swirl of Anxiety' by Inaya Uzun.





3. MENTAL HEALTH AWARDS

Each year during National Mental Health Month, Mental Health Foundation Australia recognises and celebrates the achievements and contributions of individuals, organisations and groups working tirelessly to stamp out stigma, raise awareness of mental health and provide support.

These eminent people and groups set a benchmark and shed light on innovative and best practices of service delivery to support and empower the wider Australian community. They inspire us through their achievements and challenge us to make our own contribution towards a community that promotes better mental health for all.

The awards were organised in 5 categories, and in no particular order; Mental Health Advocate of the Year, Mental Health Organisation of the Year, Mental Health Volunteer of the Year, Mental Health Youth of the Year and Mental Health Senior of the year.

The Foundation received a overwhelming response and received several nominations for the awards. The expert Awards committee comprising of mental health experts, carers and consumers carefully scrutinized the applications and selected the below mentioned awardees.

VIC

- Organisation Of The Year - School Tv
- Volunteer Of The Year - Leonie Neylon
- Youth Of The Year - Tyler Steyr

NSW

- Advocate Of The Year - Susana Bluwol
- Volunteer Of The Year - Erin Pogmore
- Senior Of The Year - Kerry O'Malley
- Youth Of The Year - Emily Unity

QLD

- Advocate Of The Year - Bronwen Edwards
- Organisation Of The Year - Roses In The Ocean
- Volunteer Of The Year - Habib Jamal

WA

- Advocate Of The Year - Nick Hudson
- Organisation Of The Year - Altius Group

TAS

- Advocate Of The Year - Jeff Milkins

ACT

- Advocate Of The Year - Purity Goj

A press release was issued by the Foundation announcing the awards and the awardees were acknowledged at the respective state launch events of National Mental Health Month on the 1st of October 2021. The Foundation would like to thank the nominees and referees for their nominations which helped the Foundation identify the above winners.





National Mental Health Month Events





OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
South Australia



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
Western Australia



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
Tasmania



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
Northern Territory



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
Queensland



VIRTUAL OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
Victoria



VIRTUAL OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
New South Wales



VIRTUAL OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
Australian Capital Territory

01
October
2021



**OFFICIAL LAUNCH
OF NATIONAL MENTAL
HEALTH MONTH 2021**



A historical moment

On Friday the 1st of October 2021, history was made for Mental Health Foundation Australia.

We achieved the mammoth task of launching our National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign for 2021 in each state and territory of Australia, both virtually and physically. Through these launches, we reached out to thousands of individuals, who joined us in the quest of advocating for, and raising awareness of mental health.

We would like to thank our staff members, board directors, scientific advisory committee members, special guests, multicultural and youth ambassadors, future leaders, volunteers, and attendees for their support, and ultimately for this grand success. We would also like to thank our sponsors, Australian Unity and Chemists Own and, supporting organisations involved.

Details of each state launch follow.

Victoria

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

VIRTUAL

The aim of this event was to officially launch National Mental Health Month 2021 in Victoria. The launch was initially to be held at Victorian Parliament however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the launch was shifted to a virtual format. Over 2000 people joined this launch across Zoom and Facebook ensuring its success.

Dignitaries at the event included David Mann AM, Master of Ceremonies, MHFA Director, Prof. Peter Barlis, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sally Capp, Ms Emma Kealy MP, Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Treasure Jennings, Mental Health Complaints Commissioner, Mr Kevin McCoy, CEO Independent and Assisted Living, Australian Unity, Daniela Priekopa, Marketing Manager, Chemists Own and Huss Mustafa, MHFA Secretary.

A keynote address was provided by A/Prof. Harry Minas on the topic of Multicultural Mental Health: Post-Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience. Sharan Velauthan also gave a lived experience talk.

We would like to congratulate the Victorian winners of the Consumer Arts Competition, Young Creative Writers Competition and the Mental Health Awards who were officially conferred on the night.

During the event, fantastic entertainment was provided by Bollywood Dance School Australia, Janaki Easwar, and students of the Emerson School.

Overall, it was a very successful launch, and we look forward to an in-person launch in 2022.

Preethi Selvaraj

Community Engagement Coordinator
VIC





New South Wales

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

VIRTUAL

The aim of this event was to officially launch National Mental Health Month 2021 in New South Wales. The launch was initially to be held at NSW Parliament however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the launch was shifted to a virtual format. Over 300 people joined this launch across Zoom and Facebook ensuring its success.

Dignitaries at the event included A/Prof. Theresa Jacques, MHFA Director, Lucy Brogden, Chair of the National Mental Health Commission, Mr Ryan Park, Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Mr Alex Greenwich MP, Independent Member for Sydney, Dr Jeannie Yoo, Clinical Director Health Services, Ausytralian Unity and Mr Kieran Bowie, State Manager, Chemists Own and Tamara Giles, Chair of SydWest Multicultural Services. We also thank Joy Rahab Sinclair, NSW Multicultural Ambassador for giving a lived experience talk.

We would like to congratulate the NSW winners of the Young Creative Writers Competition and the Mental Health Awards who were officially bestowed on the night.

During the event, fantastic entertainment was provided by Bollywood Dance School Australia.

Overall, it was a very successful launch, and we look forward to an in-person launch in 2022.

Preethi Selvaraj

Community Engagement Coordinator

NSW





Formal Address

Ryan Park MP

Shadow Minister for Mental Health



1300 643 287
WWW.MHFA.ORG.AU



Lived Experience
Speaker

**Joy Rahab
Sinclair**

MCA Leader, NSW



1300 643 287
WWW.MHFA.ORG.AU



Australian Capital Territory

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

VIRTUAL

The aim of this event was to officially launch National Mental Health Month 2021 in the Australian Capital Territory. The launch was initially to be held at the ACT Legislative Assembly however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the launch was shifted to a virtual format. Over 70 people joined this launch across Zoom and Facebook ensuring its success.

Dignitaries at the event included Varshini Viswanath, Master of Ceremonies, MHFA Vice-Chairperson, Mr Jim Goodin, The Hon. Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Mental Health, Mr Peter Cain MLA, Member for Ginninderra, Mr Andrew Braddock MLA, Member for Yerrabi, Mr Kevin McCoy, CEO of Independent and Assisted Living, Australian Unity, Associate Professor Petra Buergelt, University of Canberra, Kieran Bowie, National State Manager, Chemists Own, Mental Health Advocate of the Year, Purity Goj and Justine Muller—Lived-experience Speaker.

The event was graced by the above dignitaries who spoke about mental health, lived experience and post-pandemic recovery. There was also wonderful entertainment by the dancers of Bollywood Dance School Australia. Future plans would be to host this event next year physically with mental health organisations to display their services for the community.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

ACT



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

The Hon. Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Mental Health

Mental Health Foundation Australia

1300 643 287
WWW.MHFA.ORG.AU

Australian Unity
Chemists' Own

Varshini Visw...

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Associate Professor Petra Buergelt

Mr Andrew Braddock MLA

Peter Cain MLA

Varshini Viswanath - MC

zoom

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

6:30 PM AEDT

HOBART FUNCTION AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

The aim of this event was to officially launch National Mental Health Month 2021 in Tasmania. The launch was held at Hobart Function and Conference Centre. Over 40 people joined the very special inaugural launch of National Mental Health Month 2021 in Tasmania.

Special guests at the launch included Daryl Williams QC AM, MHFA Director, Ella Haddad – Shadow Attorney-General, Shadow Minister for Justice, Shadow Minister for Corrections, Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister for Equality and Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Councillor Dr Zelinda Sherlock - Honorary Advisor, Culturally Diverse Alliance of Tasmania, Mike Hutton-Squire – EGM, Health Services Independent and Assisted Living at Australian Unity, Sarah Ellis – Relationships Australia, Esra Gunyel – Lived Experience Speaker and Natalie Belbin – Territory Manager at Chemists Own.

We would also like to congratulate Nina Hasdell - Young Creative Writer's Award, Upper Primary Category and Jeff Milkins - Mental Health Advocate of the Year TAS who were awarded on the night.

The event was graced by the above dignitaries who spoke about mental health, lived experience and post-pandemic recovery. A very special thank you to The Honourable Barbara Baker, Governor of Tasmania for sending through a very special written message for the launch. Future plans would be to host this event next year physically with mental health organisations to display their services for the community.

Kelly Sims

Project Officer

TAS





LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

6:30PM TO 8:30PM

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT , VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

At the Official Launch in Queensland, held at Queensland Parliament, the MHFA formally began our month-long National Mental Health Month campaign by engaging community leaders and citizens, explaining the importance of promoting better mental health for all, and showcasing our theme of Mental Health: Post-Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience.

At the Queensland Launch, the MHFA narrowed the focus to child safety, particularly the post-pandemic mental strain on caseworkers and foster families, and domestic and family violence leading to interaction with the child safety system. The iconic keynote speaker, Hetty Johnston, founder of Bravehearts Foundation, and now Child and Vulnerable Persons Consultant, shared some of her personal mental health journey and observations of the child safety system.

Guests were interested to hear of the experiences and work of those that serve Queenslanders, namely: Ros Bates MP, Shadow Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Shadow Minister for Women, Shadow Minister for Medical Research; Amanda Camm MP, Shadow Minister for Child Protection, Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, Shadow Minister for Women's Economic Security; and Commissioner Ivan Frkovic, Qld Mental Health Commissioner.

Young Writers' Creative Writing Awards were presented to:

- Upper Primary (Years 5-6) - Sofia Cortenbach
- Lower Secondary (Years 7-9) - Ruby Collins
- Upper Secondary (Years 10-12) - Lara Rackham

Mental Health Awards 2021 for service to the Queensland community went to:

- Mental Health Advocate of the Year - Bronwen Edwards
- Mental Health Organisation of the Year - Roses In The Ocean
- Mental Health Volunteer of the Year - Mr Habib Jamal

The Queensland Launch of Mental Health Month was proudly supported by the Queensland Government, for which the MHFA are extremely grateful. On the night, the audience heard from the major sponsors of National Mental Health Month across Australia, Australian Unity and Chemists' Own.

55 people attended the Queensland Launch in person, and the event reach was extended through livestreaming with 621 Facebook Live views. The event flowed beautifully due to the skills of MC, Kathy McLeish, Senior Journalist and Producer. The night concluded with guests enjoying the mellow saxophone of the talented young Rudrodipto Roy.

Overall, the Launch was considered a great success, primarily due to the calibre of the MC, guest speakers, and award winners. The audience enjoyed hearing of the wonderful work that those in public office and members of the broader community are doing to support better mental health, particularly for our youth. A young award winner, in a letter of thanks to the MHFA, described it as "an amazing and inspiring event".

Susan Warby

Project Coordinator

QLD





South Australia

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

11.30 AM – 12.30 PM

ADELAIDE PARLIAMENT HOUSE

On the 1st of October 2021, Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) organised the grand Official Launch of National Mental Health Month in all states and territories in Australia. In South Australia, the event was co-hosted by Hon Stephen Wade, Minister for Health and Wellbeing and Hon Jing Lee, Assistant Minister to the Premier in the Parliament House. Invitations were sent to Mayors, Councillors, Community Leaders, MHFA Ambassadors and other key people in the community. 40 people were in attendance to discuss the much need topic of the hour, "Mental health".

The event was officially launched by Hon Stephen Wade. We were also very honoured to receive a recorded message from the Federal Minister, Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Finance for this event. Hon Simon Birmingham spoke about the importance of mental health and why such events are important for the community. Hon Jing Lee formally addressed the gathering, discussed about the mental health issues in the community and appreciated the huge initiative of MHFA.

We were joined by other key people like the Deputy Lord Mayor, SA Mental Health Commissioners, Mayor of City of West Torrens, Officers from the Office of Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention and Community Resilience, and Officials from the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, who discussed mental health problems and how to tackle them.

At the end of the event we created the much needed awareness about mental health at its highest level by discussing this important topic with Ministers and officials at the Parliament House, who could help MHFA create a meaningful difference in the mental health space.

In the future, we can aim to reach wider audience and could aim to bring in people from the general public to create awareness at a grass root level.

Priyankaa Ananthkrishna

Project Officer

SA





LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DARWIN

6.00 PM – 8.00 PM

VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

National Mental Health Month in the Northern Territory was officially launched on October 1st 2021 at the legislative assembly of Northern Territory. The objective of this launch was to put “mental health” in spotlight, to create awareness on mental health and to break the stigma surrounding mental health issues. The event commenced with casting of MHFA Journey video followed by welcome address by the MHFA chairperson Mr Vasan Srinivasan.

Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O Halloran, Administrator of the Northern Territory officially launched the event which was a great privilege for us. She spoke about mental health in general and why it is important for us to address mental health issues. Followed by the official launch, several other eminent people addressed the gathering. Addresses were given by Madam Speaker Hon. Ngaree Ah Kit, Mr Luke Gosling OAM, Kevin McCoy, CEO Australian Unity, and Carmela Scaffidi from Chemists own. Prof. Daniel Bressington, Professor of Mental health at Charles Darwin University gave an outstanding keynote address. He spoke about mental health during COVID times, and post pandemic recovery, challenges and resilience. The audience certainly had a lot of take home message from his keynote address.

In order to reach most people and to create wider awareness, the launch event was made accessible to people virtually through Facebook live streaming also through the in-person event and virtually, we had an attendance of more than 70 people. The event concluded successfully and received appreciation and wishes from a lot of people. In fact few even came forward to sponsor other events of MHFA in the Northern Territory.

Future recommendation include:

- Partnering with mental health peak bodies of the respective states for a grander event and to reach out to more people.

Priyanka Ananthakrishna

Project Officer

NT





Western Australia

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

PERTH CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON

The aim of this event was to launch National Mental Health Month in Western Australia. This was a very special event, in that it was the inaugural launch event in WA.

Keynote speakers who joined us were Anne Donaldson, MHFA Director, Mrs Jessica Stojkovski MLA, Dr. Samir Heble, Charles Gardiner Hospital, Kylie Pearsall, lived experience speaker and Peta Slocombe, Psychologist.

The speakers touched on many topics related to mental health. During the event, awardees of the Young Creative Writers' Competition, and Mental Health Awards were acknowledged and awarded officially.

MHFA was praised for our work by speakers for spreading awareness and facilitating education of mental health. Overall, the launch was very successful, with many politicians in attendance. Feedback of one of writing competition awardees included "I really enjoyed listening to this conversation. It was so insightful and fun."

We look forward to a bigger launch in 2022.

Ritika Purang

Project Officer

WA





02
October
2021



MOVE IT 4 KIDS

10:00 am – 11:00 am

Virtual





Mental Health Foundation Australia in partnership with Drummond Street Services and Hullabaloo Music, organised the event 'MOVE IT 4 KIDS' a family fun musical event. The aim of the event was to captivate young kids, encouraging them to move and dance to shake off the challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic. The fun music session started off by a welcome from Drummond Street Services, followed by Aneka Srinivasan from MHFA providing information about National Mental Health Month and the importance of Resilience and Recovery. The music session was run by Amanda Testro from Hullabaloo Music which was very engaging and well received by all.

The session has had a reachout to over 130 individuals. Mental Health Foundation Australia would like to thank Ali Hogg, Digital and Executive Officer, Drummond Street Services and Helen Rimmington, Special Projects Officer at Drummond Street Services for their support and contribution.

In the future, the Foundation will aim to engage such partnerships to promote mental health in primary school aged kids through fun musical events such as this.

Preethi Selvaraj

Community Engagement Coordinator

VIC

03
October
2021



Virtual Sound Meditation

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Virtual





Our inaugural Virtual Sound Meditation event occurred on 3rd October 2021 from 9:00am – 10:00am (AEDT).

This event was aimed at promoting the benefits of Sound healing which has been widely used throughout the world for thousands of years. A total of 800 individuals were reached across Zoom and Facebook.

The successful workshop was conducted by Vaishali Budige, founder of Divinity Project, Sound Healing Practitioner and Physiotherapist.

A future suggestion may be to host this event in a hybrid format to allow for both in-person and virtual attendance.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

VIC

04
October
2021



Multicultural and Refugees' Mental Health Symposium

**Darwin Convention
Centre**

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

In person & Virtual





The Symposium on Multicultural and Refugee Mental Health was held on the 4th of October at Darwin Convention Centre. Census data showed that “Australia is the developed-world champion” in terms of the proportion of the population born overseas. Hence, the aim of the Symposium was to further discuss the mental health of multicultural and refugee communities.

To discuss this important topic, many experts were invited including Kwame Selormey, the CEO of Malaleuca Australia, a non-profit organisation, with a sole purpose of supporting refugees, Dr Shivram Vemuri, Director of Human Economics International, Dr Edwin Joseph, President of Multicultural Council of Northern Territory, Dr Lillian Mwanri, Associate Professor at Flinders University whose research interest is in the field of the mental health of CALD communities and Bwe Thay, Victorian Multicultural Commissioner. The keynote addresses were extremely insightful and was from various points of view. Following this, the audience had an opportunity to ask questions to the panel members. The panel discussion session was extremely interesting and interactive.

In total, the Symposium reached more than 390 people through Facebook and in-person. The symposium had very good response among the Multicultural Ambassadors of Northern Territory who actively participated and volunteered at the event. Overall, the symposium met its goals of raising awareness of mental health issues and has empowered the audience with knowledge coming directly from experts in the field.

Future recommendations include:

- Holding focus group discussions with different communities to gather information about the specific mental health issues that they face. This information will help to provide guidelines to mental health organisations about culturally sensitive management and care.

Priyanka Ananthakrishna

Project Officer

NT

05
October
2021



Childcare and Mental Health Symposium

Brisbane City Hall

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

In person & Virtual



The Childcare and Mental Health Symposium aimed to focus on the mental health of the early childhood education and care workforce, and how childcare workers' mental health affects caregiving quality. With greater knowledge comes the power to enhance outcomes for childcare workers, the children in their care and, by extension, even the families and carers. MHFA were honoured to have Terry Young MP, Federal Member for Longman, provide a formal address. The audience were engrossed in the speech by Kelly Dixon, Operations Manager, Early Learning Management, in which she shared her harrowing stories from many years in the industry. Christopher Phoenix, Senior Facilitator, Phoenix Support for Educators, explained The Phoenix Cups methodology, which can empower us to recognise what we each need for our wellbeing.

The symposium also featured a Q & A discussion moderated by Kirilly Dutton and featuring Josie Sorban, clinical psychologist, along with those with many years of experience in the childcare sector in an educator and/or managerial capacity – Jae Fraser, Founder of Little Scholars School of Early Learning; Alison Lamb, Early Childhood Training Consultant, Kool Kids Training College; Michael Pecic, CEO, In Safe Hands Educators in Safety; and Christopher Phoenix.

The key outcomes of this symposium included recognition that the early childhood education and care industry, being responsible for the young and vulnerable, has always had inherent pressures on the mental health of its workforce. This has been compounded by most childcare centres needing to keep operating all through the pandemic to cater for essential workers. It was found that the industry is getting better at recognising these pressures and providing appropriate support for workers who have experienced traumatic events stemming from their workplace. However, while training within the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) does touch on mental health, the panel agreed that it should include compulsory mental health management units for both management and staff to enhance identification and understanding of issues.

There was considerable debate about whether there should be regulations to govern how symptoms of mental health problems in staff are handled, including mandatory reporting. The consensus was that it was better to focus on the positive outcomes of good mental health rather than an inflexible and punitive approach. It is important that colleagues in workplaces exercise moral and ethical level of care and support towards colleagues who might be struggling with symptoms of mental health problems which may or may not lead to the need for clinical intervention - Knowing that others care about you is a very powerful support mechanism.

For children, the transition time when the child arrives at their care centre is key to helping them feel safe. More time at home due to lockdowns, resulting in being disconnected from extended family and friends, has made it harder for children to cope during the pandemic. The key for educators is not to underestimate how well you know the children, which will help you identify underlying problems if you observe changes in a child's behaviour.

Over and above those who attended the Symposium in person, the livestream on YouTube reached 98 viewers.

The MHFA received significant feedback thanking all our guest speakers for their contribution to the enlightening discussions that took place at this event. Additionally, the MHFA thanks all attendees for their participation, and for taking the time to listen to the voices of today's early childhood education and care professionals and learning from their direct experiences, particularly as to how we could be improving the mental health of those working in the sector.

Susan Warby

Project Coordinator

QLD

06
October
2021

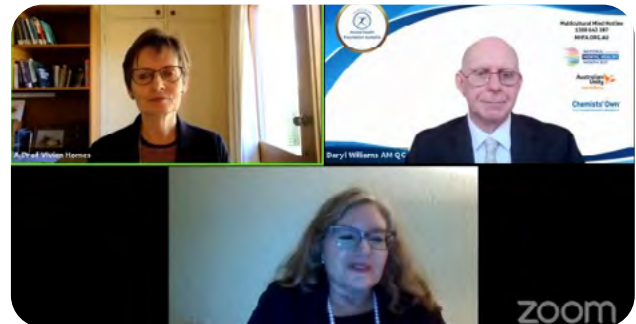


Legal Professionals' Mental Health Symposium

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual





The Legal Professionals' Mental Health Symposium occurred on 6th October 2021 from 10:00am – 12:00pm (AEDT).

The aim of the event was to discuss the mental health and wellbeing in the legal profession in joint association with the Victorian Bar. At the MHFA we understand that while solicitors, barristers and judges carry out vitally important work on a daily basis, sometimes the pressures and stresses associated with that work can have a negative effect on their mental health and wellbeing.

The event was graced by many dignitaries and prominent individuals in the legal profession, both National and International. Speakers included Daryl William QC AM, Master of Ceremonies, The Honourable Anne Ferguson, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria, Dr Dawn D'Amico, psychotherapist, educator and author, Dr Michelle Sharpe, Victorian Bar, Fiona McLeay, Legal Services Commissioner, Desi Vlahos, Leo Cussen Institute, Her Honour Johanna Metcalf, Magistrates' Court of Victoria and Associate Professor Vivien Holmes, Australian National University.

Topics such as burnout and trauma in the legal practice, working from home in a pandemic, identifying colleagues who aren't coping, wellness, values and ethics were discussed during the event. The importance of self-care was highlighted for all those within the legal profession.

The event was very successful with more than 775 individuals being reached through Facebook and Zoom. A future event suggestion may be to discuss the mental health needs of law students, and those within the social legal profession, as well as those working in other settings.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

VIC

07
October
2021

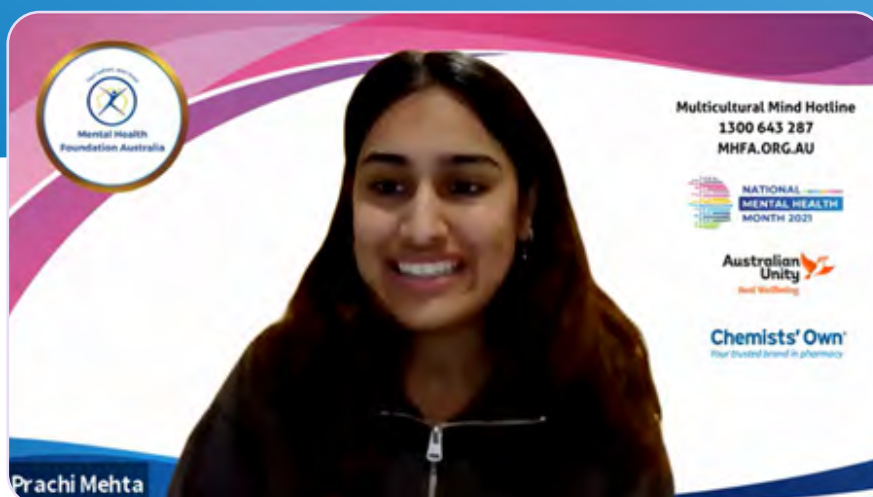


Youth Mental Health Forum

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Virtual





The virtual Youth Mental Health Forum occurred on 7th October 2021 from 6:30pm – 8:00pm (AEDT).

The aim of this event was for the MHFA’s Australian Youth Ambassadors to discuss different topics surrounding youth mental health, particularly focussing on the impacts of COVID-19. This event was very successful, having reached more than 2000 individuals through Zoom and Facebook.

The presenting Youth Ambassadors were Aakriti Malhotra, Aarushi Malhotra, Ella Kennedy, Prachi Mehta, Adam Goh, Jina Lee, Dominique Richardson, Alex Milles, Zara Paleologos, Luca Mifsud and Annie Ea.

Our Youth Ambassadors discussed topics such as the impacts of COVID-19 on young people, social health and wellbeing, social media impacts, help-seeking strategies,

self-care, and the silver linings of COVID-19. Our dedicated Youth Ambassadors worked very hard to put this event together over the past year and we congratulate them on this achievement.

We would also like to thank Abi Srinivasan for being our Master of Ceremonies, Jim Goodin, MHFA Vice Chairperson, Mr Julian Hill, Federal Member for Bruce, and Mr Mike Hutton-Squire, EGM Health Services Independent and Assisted Living at Australian Unity for joining us at this important event.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

VIC

08
October
2021



Medical Professionals Mental Health Symposium

10:00 pm – 12:00 pm

Virtual





The Medical Professionals Mental Health Symposium was originally organised in NSW, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, the symposium adopted an online mode. The virtual event was viewed by over 720 individuals across Australia.

Medical professionals face enormous pressures in their work lives, and, as a result, struggle with high levels of stress, burnout, and mental health issues, which has only been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The MHFA planned this symposium to bring together medical professionals, Federal, State and Local Government officials, industry associations and mental health organisations to discuss the mental health needs of Australia's medical professionals.

The event was chaired by Dr. Raj Khillan, Paediatrician who also gave an introductory address on the topic of "Healers Do need Healing." Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge, Patron of the MHFA welcomed all the distinguished guests. Ms Elizabeth Koff, Secretary NSW Health and Prof Peter Barlis, Consultant and Interventional Cardiologist as well as MHFA Director were key contributors at this event. The Keynote speaker was Scienticia Prof. Helen Christensen, Chief Scientist at Blackdog Institute who provided an excellent address which was very well received.

The Speakers and Panellists also included Dr. Tony Sara, Federal Vice President of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation and Dr. Chris Dalton, President of the Medical Benevolent Association of NSW who introduced their respective organisations and explained how medical professionals are being supported.

A/Prof. Theresa Jacques, Director of MHFA and Senior Staff Specialist at St Georges Hospital provided a very impactful address where she read out statements from medical professionals who worked in COVID wards.

The session ended with a panel discussion moderated by Prof. Bruce Tonge with all speakers as well as Dr Ravi Kamisetty, Dentist. The excellent panel discussed the challenges faced by medical professionals and how they can be supported to look after their own mental health.

Future Suggestions would be to host support services stalls at an in-person event, and to engage a lived experience speaker in future.

Preethi Selvaraj

Community Engagement Coordinator
NSW

09
October
2021

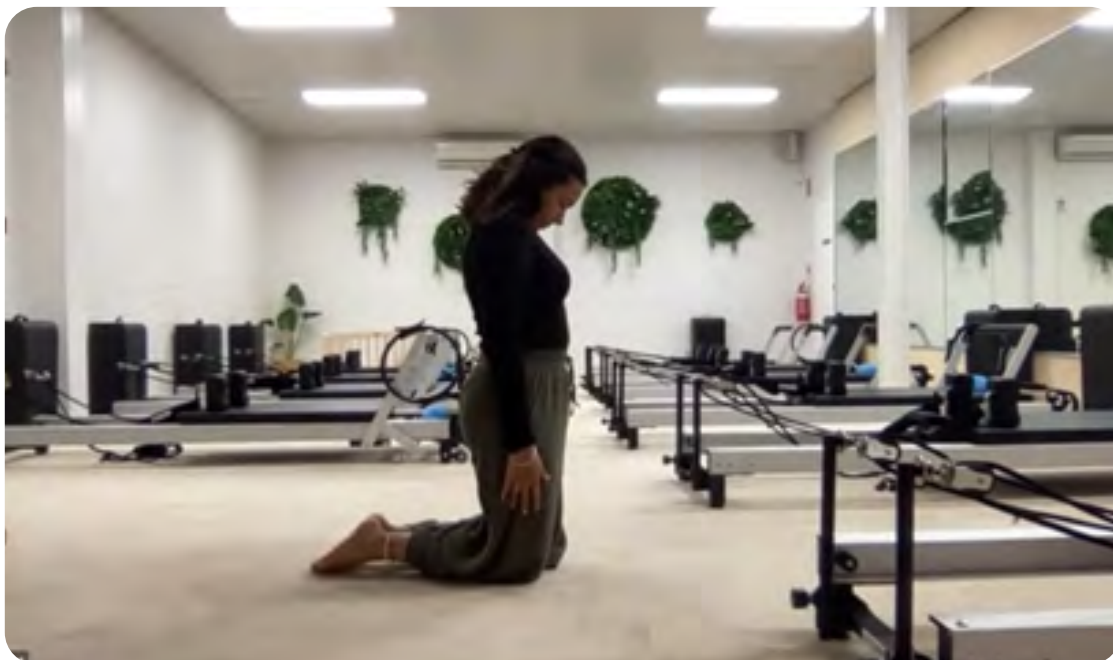


Virtual Wellness Workshops

4:00 pm – 5:15 pm

Virtual





Our Virtual Mental Health Wellness Workshops event occurred on 9th October 2021 from 4:00pm – 5:30pm (AEDT).

This event was aimed at promoting the benefits of wellness, particularly stress release, meditation, and yoga through the running of 3 virtual workshops.

The following workshops were conducted:

1. Stress Release by Meagan Goodes, Founder of Mindful Healing Toolkit
2. Yoga by Ritika Purang, Bhakti Yogi and Yoga Instructor
3. Meditation by Joel Delaney, Senior Practitioner Paddington Clinic

Through Zoom and Facebook, 671 individuals were reached out to through this event. In future, a hybrid format would be an interesting forward with both in person and virtual attendance. We would also like to thank our Master of Ceremonies, Soëlily Consen-Lynch for her wonderful facilitation of the event.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

VIC

**10
October
2021**



World Mental Health Day Summit

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Virtual

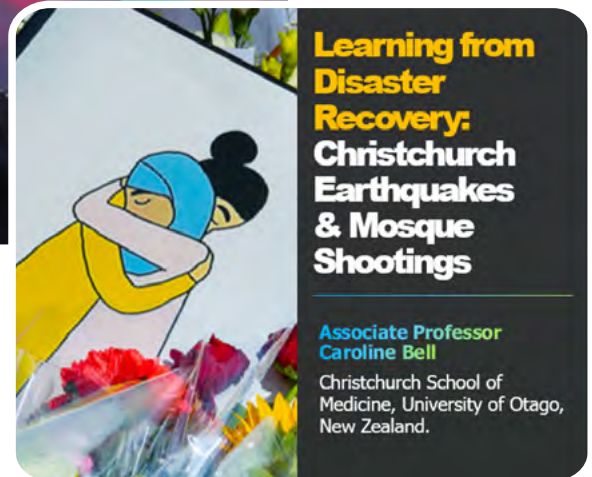




The Virtual World Mental Health Day Summit occurred on 10th October 2021 from 9:00am – 5:30pm (AEDT).

The aim of this event was to bring together leading researchers and clinicians around the world to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 across of a wide range of topics on the important occasion of World Mental Health Day. This event was extremely successful having reached more than 1000 individuals through Zoom and Facebook.

Our keynote speakers included A/Prof Mahesh Jayaram, Melbourne University, Prof. Jayashri Kulkarni AM, Monash University, Dr Shalini Arunogiri, Monash University, Prof. Louise Newman AM, Melbourne University, Prof. Sharon Goldfeld, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, Prof. Helen Milroy, University of Western Australia, Prof. Matthew Sanders, University of Queensland, A/Prof. Caroline Bell, University of Otago, Prof. Brett McDermott, James Cook University, Prof. Tony LaMontagne, Deakin University, A/Prof. Eva Kyndt, Swinburne University of Technology, Dr Ferdinal Fernando, Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Dr Sudipto Chatterjee, National Institute of Advanced Studies. Topics such as the impacts on women, education, family, community, biology, workplaces, and global challenges were highlighted by our speakers, particularly with a focus on COVID-19.



We would like to sincerely thank the summit chair and Patron of the MHFA, Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge, MHFA Chairperson, Vasana Srinivasan, CEO Independent and Assisted Living at Australian Unity, Kevin McCoy and Marketing Manager at Chemists Own, Daniela Priekopa for joining us at the event.

Since this event was originally planned as a face-to-face event, we hope to host it next year in a hybrid format which will allow both in person and virtual attendees, and thus a greater reach.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead
VIC

11
October
2021



Construction and Mental Health Forum

10:00 am – 11:30 am

Virtual





On 11th October, we hosted a Construction and Mental Health Symposium from 10:00 am – 11:30 am. The aim of this event was to raise awareness and discuss the mental health of people working in the construction/building industry. Across Zoom and Facebook, a total of over 770 individuals were connected through this event.

The event was addressed by Lucia Hou, Master of Ceremonies, Vasan Srinivasan, MHFA Chairperson, Jeremy Forbes, HALT Founder, Stuart Taylor, CEO of Springfox and Brad Pearce, NWMPHN Director.

Speakers discussed many important points such as help-seeking, stigma, resilience and workplace culture. Future suggestions include providing information of support services and financial support services for construction workers through employers, raising awareness and providing support for families of workers, addressing the lack of acknowledgement of women involved in the construction industry, focussing on stigma reduction, and holding leaders in construction organisations accountable for creating a culture in the workplace where everyone can have better mental health.

Akshay Subramanian

Project Officer

VIC

12
October
2021



Virtual Mental Health Expo

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Virtual





This purpose of this event was to showcase various mental health organisations to allow individuals to be aware of the mental health support services that may be available to them. This event was very successful having reached more than 700 individuals through Zoom and Facebook.

The Mental Health organisations showcased included Mental Health Foundation Australia, Australian Unity and Remedy Healthcare, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, EACH, Mindful Healing Toolkit, Whole Food Nutrition, Grow Australia, The Cairnmillar Institute and Mind Australia.

We would like to thank all of the above organisations for participating in our expo and for showing their commitment to promoting accessible support services for the community. In future, we would like to host an in-person expo coinciding with the Launch of NMHM in each state and territory.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

VIC

13
October
2021



Miners Mental Health Symposium

**Perth Convention and
Exhibition Centre**

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

In-person and Virtual





The aim of this Symposium was to discuss the issues miners' face, particularly in relation to their mental health, what services are available when they require assistance, what can be done to better these services and in general, what they require as a community. This event was a sequel to our Miners' Mental Health event held in Perth during National Mental Health Month 2020.

Speakers and panellists at the event included Anne Donaldson, MHFA Director, Hon. Minister Bill Johnston MLA, Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Stuart Aubrey MLA, David Bradbury, Lead Chaplain FMG, Lachie Samuel, Founder FIFO Mental Health Summit, Dale Henderson, COO Pilbara Minerals and Dr Laura Fruhen, UWA Lecturer. There was great discussion around the statistics of FIFO professionals who undergo mental health struggles during their tenure as a FIFO worker and Dr Fruhen particularly had great statistics around this. Dale Henderson explained how as an organisation, Pilbara Minerals have introduced

creative ways to connect FIFO workers to their families. Stuart Aubrey and Lachie Samuel spoke about their personal experiences in the FIFO industry. All of these speakers made for a very interesting and insightful panel discussion.

The outcome of the discussion was very positive. The Symposium had a reach of over 400 views both in-person and virtually, thus creating a national reach. Coincidentally, there was a mining seminar occurring at the same time right next door that started earlier, thus we had a flow of people in and out.

Future suggestions for this event, is to include families of miners and FIFO workers to discuss their mental health impacts from being associated in the industry.

Ritika Purang
Project Officer
WA

**14
October
2021**



Crime and Mental Health Symposium

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Hobart Function and
Conference Centre**



On the 14th of October between 10 am and 12 pm, we hosted a Crime and Mental Health Symposium at Hobart Function and Conference Centre.

The aims and purpose of this symposium was:

- to discuss and explore what support services are available for offenders both inside and outside of prisons
- to strengthen the mental health service response and breadth of support accessible to people who perpetrate or are victims of crime
- to improve upon the national coordination of mental health support in Australia
- to promote evidence-based practice that advocates for responsible criminal justice policies
- to provide a facilitated opportunity for Tasmanians to connect in order to better understand the issues surrounding crime and the direct connection to mental health
- to connect and involve sector leaders in a meaningful opportunity aimed to explore local issues relating to crime and mental health
- to provide future recommendations for improvement regarding crime and mental health

The symposium explored key questions such as what support services are currently available for victims of crime, what can be done to improve upon these services and how mental health issues can be minimised in the prison system in future.

Speakers at the event were Kelly Sims, Master of Ceremonies, Dr Georgina O'Donnell, Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, Prof. Kimberley Norris, University of Tasmania, Don McCrae, Manager Housing and Correction, Salvation Army, Esra Gunyel, Lived Experience Speaker and Caroline Dean, Former Prison Reform Campaigner.

The event was a succession of the above presenters who shared key messages and engaged in prompt discussion in relation to issues surrounding crime, and mental health. The attendees were presented with short and robust talks delivered by sector leaders that explored some of the key challenges in their field of

work, alongside ideas for solutions. The key messages highlighted available supports and services, as well as challenged current practices, masculine culture, inclusion & professional conduct. The day was formatted to highlight the importance of professional collaboration and formally justified why we should be taking a more integrated, streamlined, evidence-based best-practice & collective approach to addressing crime and mental health in Tasmania. The supported networking breaks replaced the panel session due to the number of attendees and were strategically formatted to provide participants with the opportunity to first and foremostly connect, as well as to openly discuss relevant issues relating to crime and mental health.

Future Recommendations:

- Address community perception and reassess overarching mandates and actions aimed to meet national goals in relation to crime and mental health
- Recognise key issues that inform a review of current commitments and policies addressing crime, while actively considering and reporting on its links to mental health challenges
- Acknowledge the overall short term nature of funding agreements and service provision that currently drives the limited workforce security, capacity & service delivery trends
- Secure and promote a national mental health coordination facilitation role in order to develop a national strategy with key targets led by evidence-based best-practice research, that also supports the overall improvement of service provision while focusing on a more holistic, collective & streamlined approach
- Better recognise the intent behind all human rights and common values legislation and raise the standard of expectation for ethical practice relating to crime and mental health

Kelly Sims

Project Officer

TAS

15
October
2021



Carers Mental Health Forum

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Virtual





On the 15th of October, we hosted a Carers Mental Health Forum between 1 pm and 2:30 pm. This event was a continuation from our Carers Mental Health Forum hosted during National Mental Health Month 2020.

The aim of this event was to discuss the very important topic of the mental health of carers and the unique challenges they face.

Speakers at this event were Hayriye Uluca, Master of Ceremonies, Jim Goodin, MHFA Chairperson, Prof Greg Murray, Director of Centre for Mental Health, Anthony Carbines, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, Nick O'Callaghan, EGM Home and Disability Services IAL, Australian Unity, Jim Beer, OCD Support Group Facilitator and lived experience speaker, Bruce Wong CEO, Foot Solutions and Sonia Di Mezza, CEO Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services. We were also joined by Pushpa Vaghela, Leader, Parents and Carers Support Group Facilitator and Matt Dale, Bipolar Carers Support Group Facilitator during the panel discussion.

Many discussion points around funding for carers, unique experience of multicultural carers, self-care and boundaries to name a few were touched on by speakers. Through Zoom and Facebook, we were able to reach out to over 800 people across the nation and internationally. Future suggestions noted by speakers included providing support and translated information to carers coming to Australia from other countries, providing more support services in regional areas around Australia and that caring should be facilitated by breaks, and self-care.

Akshay Subramanian
Project Officer
VIC

16
October
2021

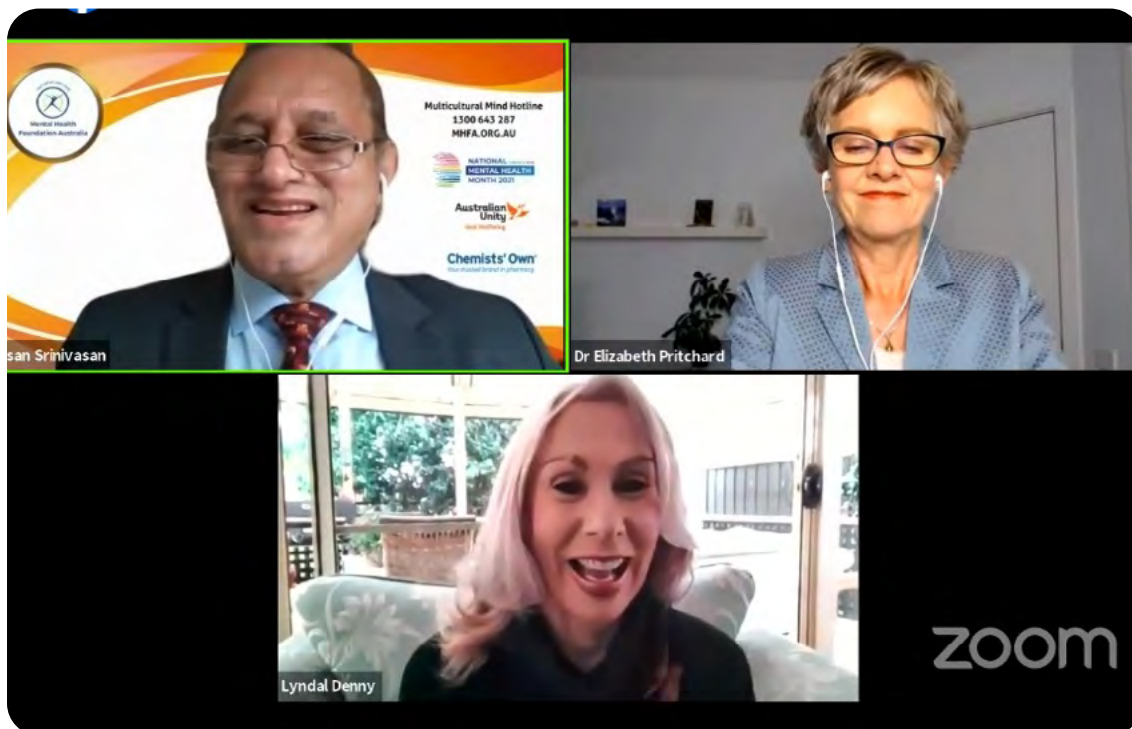


Truck Driver's Mental Health Forum

10:00 am – 11:30 am

Virtual





On the 16th of October, we Truck Driver's Mental Health Forum between 10 and 11:30 am. Speaker at the event were Vasan Srinivasan, Master of Ceremonies, Dr Elizabeth Pritchard, Researcher at Monash University, Lyndal Denny, CEO of Women in Trucking, and Bruce Wong, CEO of Foot Solutions.

Dr Elizabeth Pritchard discussed findings of the study that was conducted at Monash University regarding the mental health of Australian Truck Drivers such as psychological distress factors and stigma. The main concerns identified within the study from truck drivers included a lack of understanding about mental health, high levels of stress beyond the driver's control, workplace culture of denying and repressing mental illness and the strain of separation from family when on the road.

Lyndal Denny emphasised the very important work that truck drivers do every day, as well as the nature of work being dangerous and lonely, and often thankless. Lyndal

also discussed the unique challenges faced by women in this field such as taking care of kids or having to take their children with them on trips. She also discussed factors such as gender bias, sexism and misogyny in this work which is typically male dominated.

Future suggestions included assisting truckies to foster strong connections both in the family unit and in the workplace, to work on changing workplace culture around mental health, to promote active help-seeking, to increase mental health literacy, to revisit mental health regulations in the workplace, and to engage an all of industry approach to mental health.

Felicity Mackin

Project Officer

VIC

NATIONAL WALK



17
October
2021



FOR MENTAL HEALTH 2021

Half a million
Australians!

*Thank
you*



Our biggest and most successful event has always been our Walk for Mental Health. In 2020, amidst the pandemic we organised a 'Virtual Walk' allowing people to walk from anywhere and everywhere across the nation. This continued in 2021 with our MHFA app, as well as some physical walks across the country on the 17th of October. We are extremely proud of this monumental achievement, having reached out to more than 500,000 individuals through our walk for mental health this year.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 this year, the MHFA was determined to deliver our annual walk, especially due to the increase and exacerbation of mental health issues in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We can proudly say this initiative was delivered even bigger and better this year.

The Walk for Mental Health was held in the following locations in each capital city:

- VICTORIA – Virtual Walk
- NEW SOUTH WALES – Virtual Walk
- QUEENSLAND - City Botanic Garden, Brisbane
- WESTERN AUSTRALIA – Perry Lakes Reserve, Perth
- SOUTH AUSTRALIA - Red Gum Park, Adelaide
- AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY - Yerrabi Pond, Canberra
- TASMANIA – Virtual
- NORTHERN TERRITORY – George Brown Botanical Gardens

Thank you to all participants, teams, sponsors, organisations, consumers, carers, family members, children, friends and volunteers for creating much-needed awareness about the importance of mental health and wellbeing in our community.

Mental Health Foundation Australia would like to acknowledge all of our multicultural ambassadors and volunteers who made this achievement possible.

VICTORIA – VIRTUAL

Due to harsh COVID-19 lockdowns across metropolitan Melbourne, it was impossible to host a large walking group in Melbourne as the MHFA has done in previous years. Instead, the MHFA created a new and improved app and website which allowed walkers to participate in the walk virtually on the special day, but also throughout the month with our 60 day virtual walk challenge.

The virtual walk was an overwhelming success with thousands of Victorians joining the walk from locked down metropolitan Melbourne and across the state of Victoria. This proved to be a great awareness exercise and proved that organisational success is possible in the age of COVID with walkers joining from parks, sidewalks and backyards across the state.

We are excited to revisit memories from our 2019 walk with 12,000 walkers at Albert Park Lake, and to hopefully double that in 2022.

NEW SOUTH WALES

VIRTUAL

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in place in NSW its proved challenging to form a large group of walkers to walk for mental health as we would in previous years.

Instead, the MHFA and its multicultural ambassadors organised a series of walks across NSW in small groups and with their families subject to these restrictions. Many sported their MHFA t-shirt and pin to celebrate walking on this special day. Additionally, the MHFA had a large number of walkers joining the walk virtually in NSW via the walk website and app.

QUEENSLAND

City Botanic Garden, Brisbane

On Sunday 17th October, MHFA hosted the annual Walk for Mental Health all around Australia, with the option to Walk with a group or join virtually.

In Queensland, the MHFA had group walks at 4 different locations - Brisbane City Botanic Gardens, Mount Tamborine, and two walks on the Gold Coast. Thank you to the efforts of individual MHFA Multicultural Ambassadors and GOPIO Gold Coast for making the additional walks a reality.

At the livestreamed Walk for Mental Health in the Brisbane City Botanic Gardens, the walkers had a fun and energetic warm-up session with Narasimhan Ravi, Diversity Sports Coordinator for Multicultural Australia. The crowd was formally welcomed by MHFA Director, Kirilly Dutton. The MHFA were then honoured to have Councillor Vicki Howard, Civic Chair for Community, Arts and Nighttime Economy, representing the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, deliver a warm and engaging opening address.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perry Lakes Reserve, Perth

The MHFA organised this year's Walk for Mental Health in WA at Perry Lakes Reserve 4. The walk was MC'd by WA Project Officer Ritika Purang. Walkers were also treated to a warmup and stretches by Ritika prior to beginning the walk.

This event very well received and many conversations were had throughout the day. We received a great amount of feedback, all centred around what a great event it was and what an important reminder it was to take care of themselves and others. A number of attendees asked about upcoming MHFA events as they would love to attend more events like this.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Red Gum Park, Adelaide

Our walk event in SA was bigger and better than in 2020. A total of 109 people, registered for the event. The event was launched and formally addressed by the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Cr Sandy Verschoor. The Lord Mayor and her husband also joined the walkers around the track. Attendees were also treated to a vibrant Zumba warmup before the walk.

This year's walk was particularly important to lift up the community's spirits after a year of pandemic and lockdowns. In fact the theme for this year's mental health month events was "Post-pandemic recovery, challenges and resilience." With the theme in mind, several people participated in the walk with their family, friends and colleagues to advocate for mental health. Members from The University of Adelaide's rotaract club also showed their support to MHFA and its mission by participating and completing the 5km walk.

With this event being a great success, in the future, we can attract more participants through wider promotion. We can also expand the event to bikers and encourage them to participate.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Yerrabi Pond, Canberra

The purpose of the Nationwide walk event was to promote and raise awareness of mental health in the Australian

Capital Territory. With the lifting of restrictions just a few days before, we were able to host our walk event and celebrate the spirit of this momentous event across the country. We would like to thank our ACT Multicultural Ambassadors and Mr Andrew Braddock, Member for Yerrabi for their support in making this event possible. Across the country, over 500,000 individuals were reached through Facebook, Zoom and email campaigns. What a grand success! We look forward to a bigger and better Walk event in the ACT in 2022.

TASMANIA

Queens Domain, Hobart

Due to the snap lockdown in Tasmania, it proved challenging to form a large group of walkers to walk for mental health as we would in previous years. Instead, the MHFA and its multicultural ambassadors walked subject to COVID restrictions within their local vicinity with the spirit of walking for mental health. We are looking forward to hosting a larger and more successful event again in 2022.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

George Brown Botanical Gardens

October 17 2021 marked the day for Northern Territory's walk for mental health. This was organised by the Mental Health Foundation Australia with a focus to create awareness and knowledge about post pandemic recovery challenges and resilience.

The walk commenced at 10:30 am post the official launch by Hon. Paul Kirby, Minister for Small Business. Our Northern Territory Ambassadors facilitated the event with much ease.

The audience who participated were enthusiastic about the objective of the walk and that marked the success of the event. We had around 48 walkers, who thoroughly enjoyed the fantastic Zumba warmup before completing the 2 hour walk route.

MHFA is happy about the support it received for the event and will be focussing on increasing participation to increase awareness and break stigma in the upcoming months.





18
October
2021

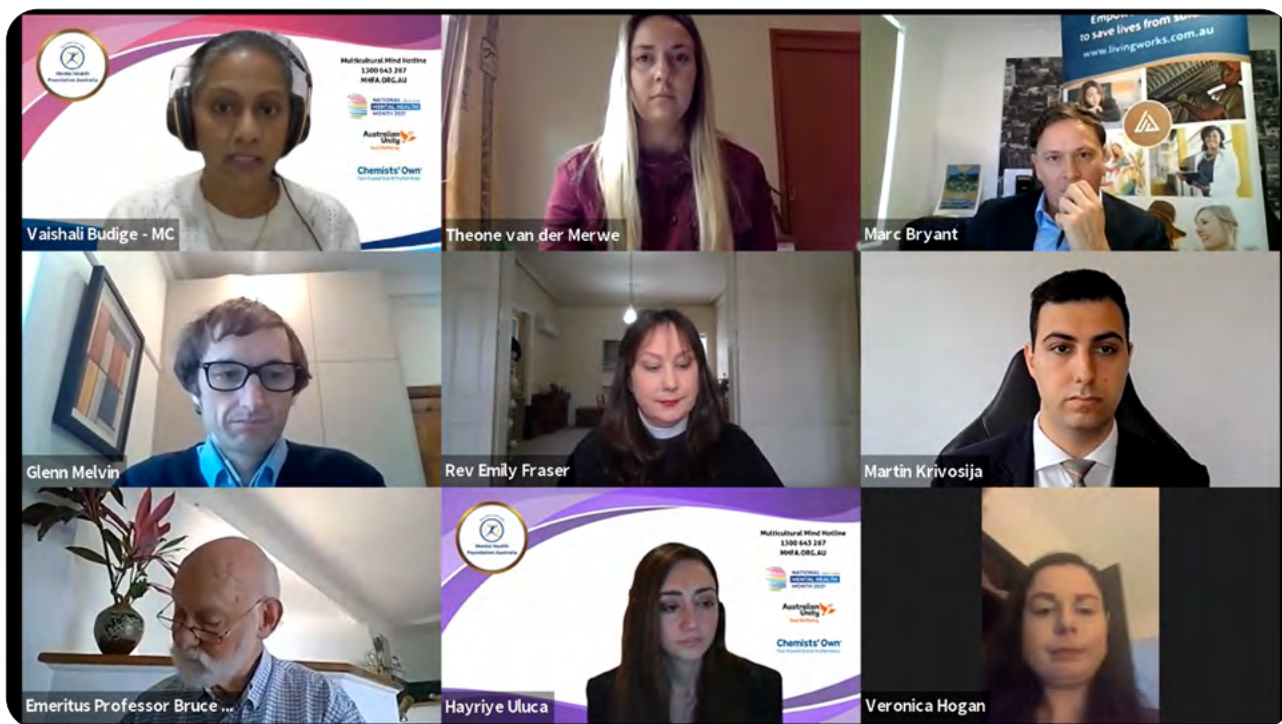


Youth Suicide Prevention Forum

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Virtual





On the 18th of October, MHFA hosted a Youth Suicide Prevention Forum between 1:00 pm and 2:30 pm. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of the prevention of suicide in the younger generation, and to discuss what more needs to be done in the crucial area.

Speakers at this event included Vaishali Budige, Master of Ceremonies, Martin Krivosija, MHFA Youth Ambassador, Prof. Glenn Melvin, Deakin University, Theone van Der Merwe, Youth Ambassador, Hayriye Uluca, State Litigation Leader at Maurice Blackburn, Rev. Emily Fraser, School Chaplain, Rachel McKellar, Australian Unity and Veronica Hogan, Multicultural Ambassador. We were also joined by Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge, who moderated the panel discussion, Marc Bryant, Director of Suicide Prevention at Livingworks Australia and Emily Unity, Lived experience consultant who joined us as panel members.

In total, over 1000 people were reached across Zoom and Facebook through this event. We would like to pay special attention to Hayriye Uluca and Maurice Blackburn

who announced their very special contribution of \$50,000 towards establishing MHFA's Youth Suicide Prevention Course.

Speakers raised many points such as the need to better connect with young individuals who are at risk of suicide, especially through online forums and platforms, picking up on behaviour and speech of youth to detect if they are at risk of suicide, promoting meditation and mindfulness among youth, encouraging seeking support, approaching at risk youth with a non-judgmental attitude and respecting their thoughts and feelings, and assisting youth to foster a sense of belonging, community and social connection.

Future suggestions may be to host this event as a round table discussion with youth in one room.

Akshay Subramanian

Project Officer
VIC

19
October
2021

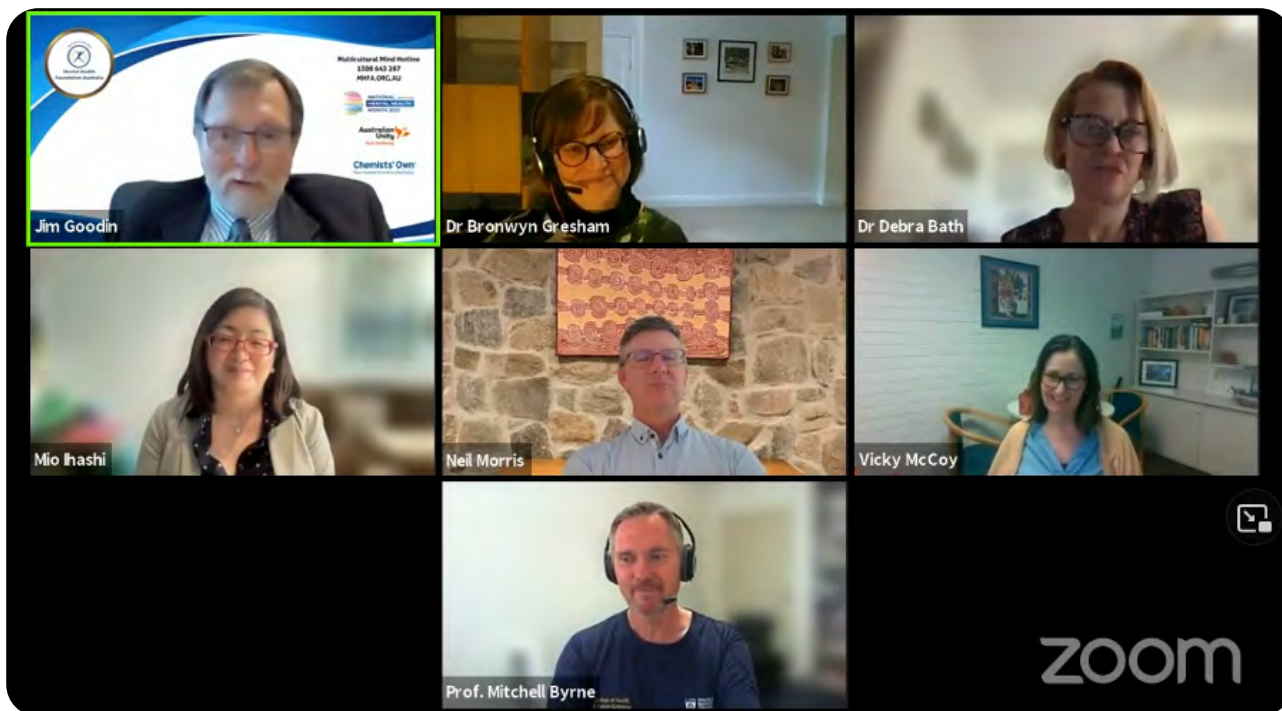


Universities and Mental Health Forum

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Virtual





The aim of this event was to bring together heads of wellbeing and mental health initiatives at various tertiary institutions across Australia to have an open and constructive conversation about what is working, and what needs to be improved regarding mental health support at universities. At the MHFA, we recognise that University students are likely to experience psychological hardship due to various factors such as academic and financial demands, isolation, loneliness, and lack of self-care. This is also potentially heightened for international students. University years also for most concur with the developmental stage of young adulthood, also seeing the onset of many mental illnesses.

Speakers at the event included Christina Chia, Master of Ceremonies, Dr Bronwyn Gresham, RMIT University, Dr Debra Bath, Griffith University, Mio Ihashi, Monash University, Vicki McCoy, University of Adelaide, Prof. Mitchell Byrne, Charles Darwin University, Neil Morris, University of New South Wales and Jim Goodin, Vice Chairperson MHFA.

Our speakers spoke about the status of mental health supports for staff and students within Universities, extra support during COVID-19 and future recommendations.

Factors such as increased funding into mental health and wellbeing initiatives, increasing mental health literacy through Mental Health First Aid and external partnerships with community mental health organisations were suggested as ways forward in this sector.

This event was extremely successful having reached over 1500 individuals through Zoom and Facebook. A future suggestion would be to extend this event by hosting it at a university venue, and involve students to further this discussion.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead

VIC

**20
October
2021**

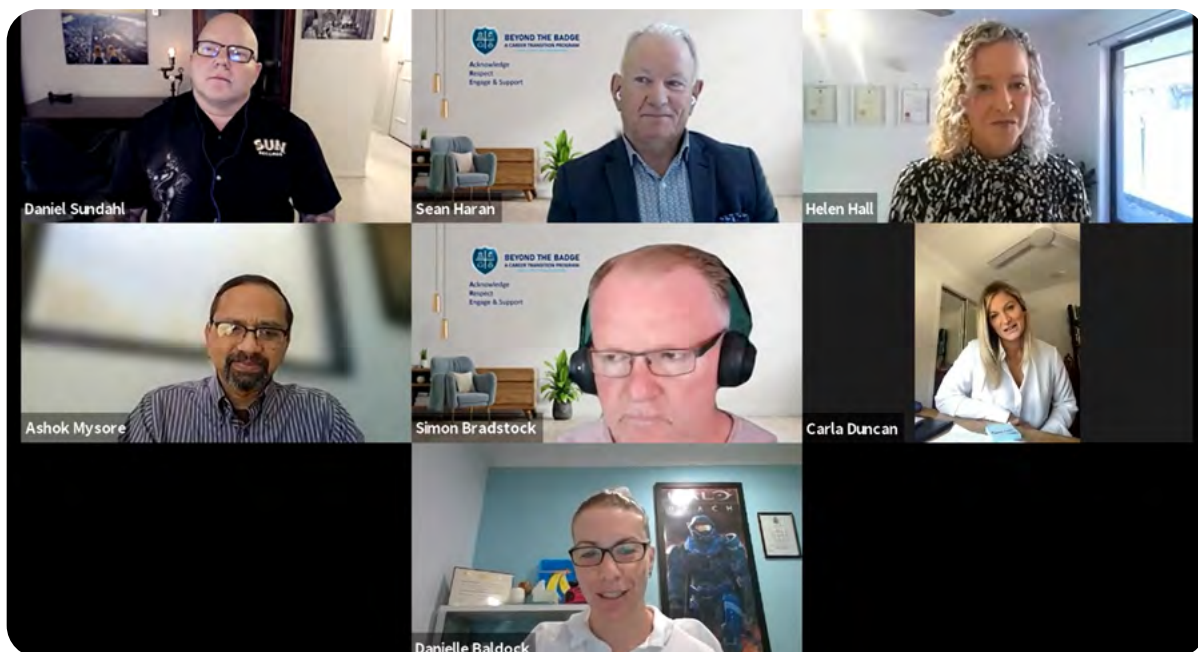


Police Personnel's Mental Health Symposium

10:00 pm – 12:00 pm

Virtual





On the 20th of October, the MHFA hosted a Police Personnel’s Mental Health Symposium aimed at discussing and raising awareness of the mental health of police officers, and all who work within this important profession.

Speakers at the event included Carla Duncan, Australian Federal Police, Ashok Mysore, Vice President and Regional Head Delivery and Operations for Australia and New Zealand Infosys, Danielle Baldock, Psychologist and Former Police Officer, Simon Bradstock, Founder and Director Beyond the Badge, Sean Haran, Founder and Director Beyond the Badge, Daniel Sundahl, Founder and President Peer Recovery and Resilience Society, and Helen Hall, Amovita International. We would like to specially thank Dee Fraser, Regional Manager ACT and NSW Doorways for assisting with the organising of this event.

Overall the event was very successful, reaching more than 1000 people across Zoom and Facebook. Speakers

raised many important points around the value of exercise, rest and work/life satisfaction, providing more support to retired police officers, giving autonomy and being supportive in the workplace for police officers and police officials, especially after suffering trauma, raising awareness and removing stigma for police personnel to seek help for their mental health, opening up about mental health and the need for this to be implemented in the culture of workplaces, and educating future police personnel on the difficulties that accompany the job.

Akshay Subramanian

Project Officer

VIC

21
October
2021



Sport and Mental Health Forum

Brisbane City Hall
10am to 12 noon

Virtual & In-person



The Sport and Mental Health Forum focussed on crucial periods for managing mental wellbeing in sport, including aspiring to transition into elite sport, dealing with external pressures, building understanding for coaches and parents, and transitioning out of the activity and the limelight.

The MHFA was honoured to feature a pre-recorded opening address from the Federal Minister for Sport, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck. MC, Corey Sells, Facilitator for Outside The Locker Room, then conducted an interview of two elite swimmers from different eras - The legendary Tracy Stockwell, Former Olympian and Vice-President of Swimming Australia, and her son Will Stockwell, who is still competing. The MHFA were so grateful that Will was willing to speak openly of his lived experience with the fragility of mental health, and to share the techniques and practices that he has used to help cope with the stresses of not only being an athlete but also a human being.

A keynote speech from Michael Duhig, Educational and Developmental Psychologist of Maverick Psychology, focussed on how athletes can optimise their transition out of professional and elite sport, including planning for the next phase and identifying their support team. Michael also recommends that sporting organisations embed transition managers.

The forum also featured a Q & A discussion moderated by Narasimhan Ravi, Diversity Sports Coordinator for Multicultural Australia. The panellists were: Andrew Crowell, Personal Excellence and Wellbeing Manager, Brisbane Lions Football Club & Former Athlete; Annie Flamsteed, Founder and CEO, Inspiretek & Former Athlete; Rachel Jones, Founder & Director, Lift High Performance Consultants; Krishneel Maharaj, Performance Psychologist at The Mind and Movement Co, Coach & Former Athlete; and Michael Duhig.



The main takeaway from the forum was that coaches at all levels, plus sporting administrators, need a grounding of mental health knowledge - with Mental Health First Aid training as a minimum. Coaches are key as they have an impact on the athletes in their care, may be able to detect behavioural changes in an athlete, will benefit from increased awareness around their own mental wellbeing, and can then model help-seeking behaviour and provide appropriate resources to athletes. Coaches can also increase athlete wellbeing and performance by creating enriched environments - a foundation of psychological safety, and pillars of connection, choice, and motivation. As in other industries, technology was seen to be able to play a role in managing mental health, particularly early screening and education at scale in the wider community. Resources need to be available, and users need to understand how and when they can access these resources. However, this cannot be achieved without funding, to make prevention and early intervention a genuine priority, and national legislation would also assist. With legislation and funding, National and State bodies could be assisted in creating frameworks and measures, and community sport be provided with easy-to-use systems. It was suggested on multiple occasions that sporting organisations need to recognise mental wellbeing as a performance driver - "a happy athlete is a faster athlete." Athletes are also more likely to perform better under pressure if they focus on the process rather than the outcome. Developing a person as a whole human is important for them in all aspects of their life, before during and after sport, and responsibility is across the whole community, including parents.

The forum had an overwhelming response as, aside from those attending in person, there were over 400 views via the Facebook livestream. The discussion at the forum was very enlightening and the speakers were well qualified. With the number of questions submitted prior to the event, the panel discussion could have continued for many more hours.

The MHFA thanks all the speakers and panellists. MHFA also thanks all attendees for their participation, and for taking the time to listen to the voices of sportspeople, sports administrators, coaches, and psychologists, to gain insights into what can be done better to support the mental health of sportspeople at all ages and stages.

Susan Warby

Project Coordinator

QLD

22
October
2021



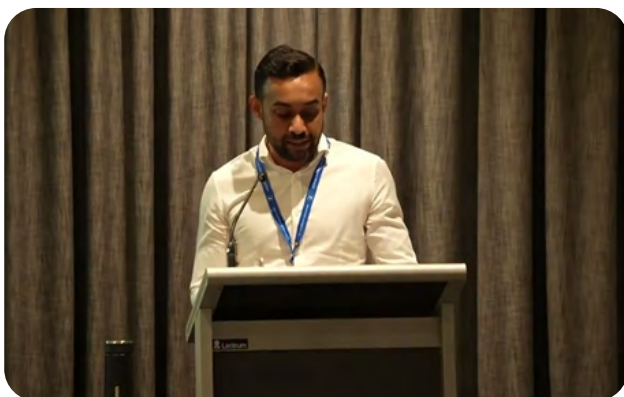
Mental Health of Mental Health Professionals

**Perth Convention and
Exhibition Centre**

10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Virtual/In-person





This symposium discussed what support/services are available for those who are working in the mental health field, as well as what can be done to better these services and how mental health issues can be minimised in this industry in the future. Considering the impact of COVID-19, and the increased demand placed on our mental health professionals, the importance of discussing this topic was further highlighted.

Speakers at the event included Anne Donaldson, MHFA Director, Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Dr. Nathan Gibson, Chief Psychiatrist WA, Dr. Bruce Campbell, Centre for Clinical Interventions, Peta Slocombe, Psychologist, Georgia Lowth, Occupational Therapist and Fadil Bahadoor, Mental Health Nurse.

Discussions during the event were around unique mental health challenges of mental health professionals within

each of their fields. The panellists shared their personal experiences as well as how they encourage their peers to look after their own mental health. Peta added onto this by introducing her app – One Million Lives as a tool that is available for individuals and professionals.

This event was successful with more than 200 individuals having tuned in across the in-person event, as well as virtually. The general view of the speakers and attendees was passion towards raising more awareness around this in their work places, now more than ever. Especially coming out of the pandemic which placed a considerable strain on this workforce, never present before.

Ritika Purang
Project Officer
WA

24
October
2021



Parenting and Mental Health Webinar

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Virtual





On the 24th of October, we hosted a Parenting and Mental Health Webinar between 1 pm and 3 pm. Considering the impacts of the pandemic, particularly with home-schooling and parents working from home, it was all the more important to discuss this topic.

Speakers at this event were Latha Srinivasan, Master of Ceremonies, Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Associate Professor Avril Brereton, Senior Research Fellow at Monash University, Dr Christopher Mogan, Clinical Psychologist, Nicci Tepper, Mindstep Coaching Service Manager, Australian Unity, and Bruce Wong, CEO Foot Solutions.

Speakers particularly touched on evidence based parenting programs such as the Triple P Parenting Program, parenting special needs children, increasing confidence of families, as well as navigating challenges faced by parents within their family unit and within extended family units.

Suggestions to parents and families included the importance of planning the roles and duties of each family member in advance, to act as a democratic family unit which takes into consideration the opinions and concerns of all, and avoiding having important conversations over text as opposed to in person.

A future recommendation may be to organise a panel of parents to discuss their experiences as part of an extended discussion.

Preethi Selvaraj

Community Engagement Coordinator
VIC

25
October
2021

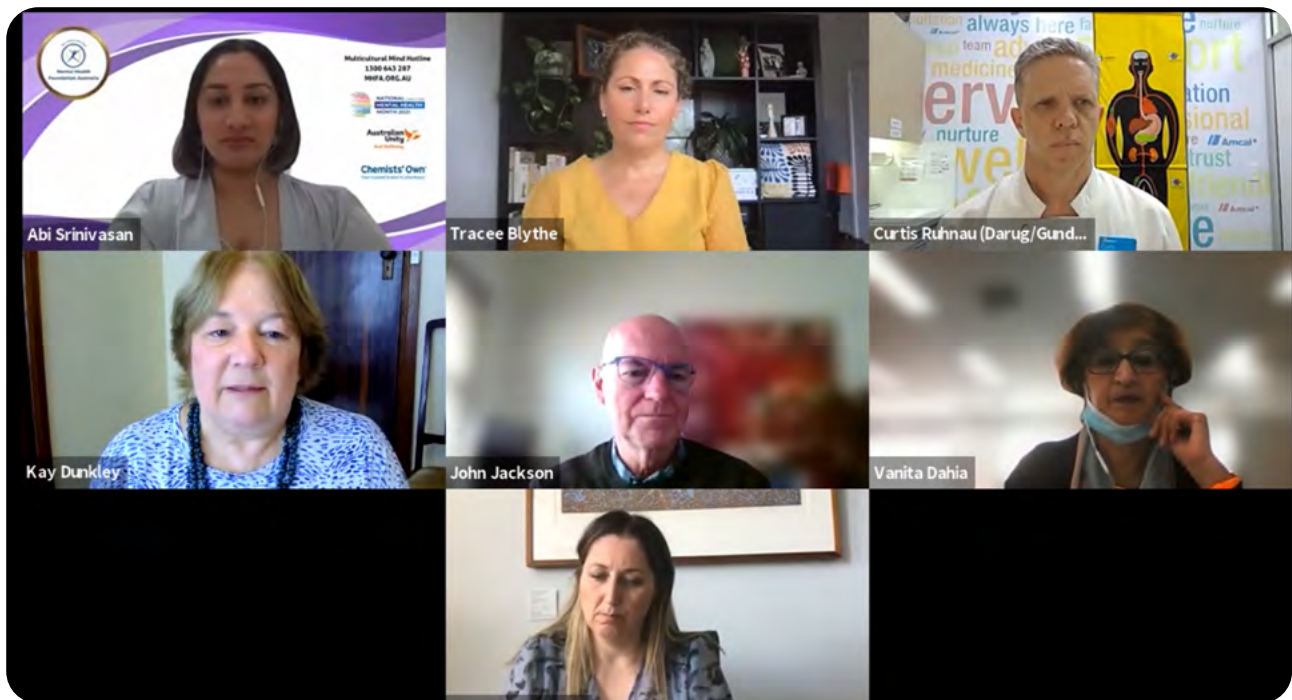


Pharmacists Mental Health Symposium

10:00 pm – 12:00 pm

Virtual





On the 25th of October we held a Pharmacists Mental Health Symposium between 10 am and 12 pm. The aim of this event was to discuss the industry impacts of mental health in pharmacy and to discuss what more needs to be done.

Speakers at the event included Abinaya Srinivasan, Master of Ceremonies, Mike Hutton-Squire, EGM Health Services Australian Unity, Emma McBride MP, Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Carers, Daniela Priekopa, Marketing Manager Chemists Own, Vanita Dahia, Naturopath and Pharmacist, Curtis Ruhnau, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited NSW Director, John Jackson, President of the Victorian Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and Western Pacific Pharmaceutical Forum and Tracee Blythe, Naturopath, Educator and Consultant. We were also joined by Kay Dunkley, Executive Officer Pharmacists Support Service who joined us as a part of the panel discussion.

Overall, this event was very successful having reached more than 2000 individuals through Zoom and Facebook. Speakers raised many important points such as the need for building rapport with staff members at the pharmacy and the importance of working as a team, developing procedures to minimise work stress, encouraging staff to take breaks in order to prevent burnout, promoting a work life balance, increasing recognition and remuneration of pharmacists on a similar level to doctors or dentists and workplaces to improve the culture of help-seeking at pharmacies.

Akshay Subramanian

Project Officer
VIC

**26
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Food and Mood Forum

10:00 pm – 12:00 pm

Virtual





On the 26th of October, MHFA organised a Food and Mood Forum between 10:00 am and 12:00 pm. For the past few awareness campaigns, we have held this event, extending our discussions and reach in 2021. The aim of this event was to shed light on the connection between food and mental health and eating disorders, particularly in wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Speakers at the event included Flic Manning, Inspirational Conference Speaker, Author and Master of Ceremonies, Ashok Mysore, Vice President and Regional Head – Delivery and Operations for Australia and New Zealand Infosys, Nicci Tepper, MindStep Coaching Service Manager, Independent and Assisted Living, Australian Unity, Prof. Felice Jacka, Director of the Food and Mood Centre at Deakin University and Janet Lowndes, Director and Principal Psychologist at Mind Body Well.

Across Zoom and Facebook, more than 800 individuals were reached through this event. Speakers raised many important points such as advocating for food that are plant based and unprocessed, the importance of addressing mood problems and eating together as they are often not separate entities, encouraging the push for healthy food options being cheaper and more easily accessible for people, providing training to those in the psychology field on giving good nutritional advice to their clients and introducing Medicare benefits for dieticians.

We hope to extend this event even further next year.

Akshay Subramanian

Project Officer
VIC

27
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Finance and Mental Health Forum

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual





On the 27th of October, MHFA hosted a Finance and Mental Health Symposium between 10:00 am and 12:00 pm. Initially, this event was to be hosted in NSW, however, due to their extended lockdowns, it was successfully shifted to a virtual platform. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic such as unemployment and tipping into superannuation, the importance of discussing this topic seemed greater than ever.

Speakers at the event included Malini Raj, Master of Ceremonies, Dr Amanda Ferguson, Organisational Psychologist, Jane Monica-Jones, Financial Therapist, Matthew Jackman, Lived Experience Advocate and Meena Vageesh, Branch Manager ANZ.

Across Zoom and Facebook, more than 300 individuals tuned into the event. Speakers touched on many important points such as teaching financial literacy at a young age, noticing signs of financial abuse, reaching

out to your bank for assistance, learning how to budget effectively, and the societal underpinnings of poverty.

Speakers emphasised the importance of reaching out for assistance with finances such as to a financial therapist, or to financial aid, and also the importance of reaching out to your bank for support.

Preethi Selvaraj

Community Enagagement Coordinator
VIC

27
October
2021

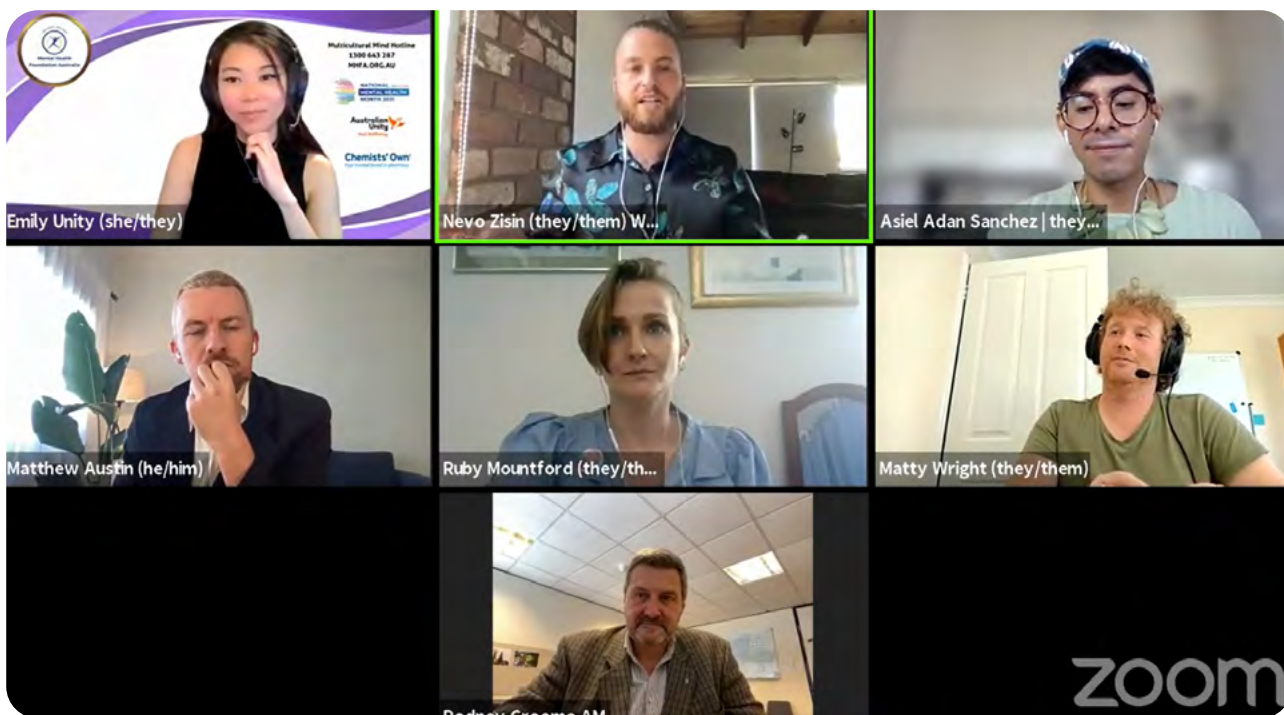


LGBTIQA+ **Mental Health** **Forum**

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Virtual





On the 27th of October, MHFA organised a LGBTIQ+ Mental Health Symposium. The aim of this event was to discuss the mental health of LGBTIQ+ communities particularly regarding the status of mental health support services. This event was very successful, having reached over 600 individuals through Zoom and Facebook.

The event was addressed by Emily Unity, Master of Ceremonies, Dr Asiel Adan Sanchez, Rodney Croome, Ruby Mountford, Matty Wright, Nevo Zisin and Matthew Austin. Our speakers discussed many important points regarding the importance and under appreciation of peer support, the need for incorporating more LGBTIQ+ specific training within mental health courses, integrating lived

experience in decision making and funding processes, and the impact of shame and the inner critic particularly for LGBTIQ+ communities.

We look forward to hosting this event with more lived experience speakers in a round table format to promote further discussions on this important topic.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead
Victoria

28
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2021



Defence and Mental Health Symposium

Brisbane City Hall
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual







The Defence and Mental Health Symposium included the sharing of lived experience with mental illness, and then covered a range of support services, tools, and ideas for improving mental wellbeing outcomes for the Defence community.

The MHFA appreciated an understanding pre-recorded opening address from Minister for Defence, The Hon Peter Dutton MP.

The next three speakers demonstrated great strength in sharing their confronting stories of lived experience, all of them wanting to reduce stigma and encourage others to seek early intervention when symptoms of mental health problems start to appear. Highly respected Wing Commander Jonathan McMullan, RAAF, Detachment Commander MQ-9B Resident Project Team, currently based in California, was interviewed by Karen Contencin. His advice to his younger self was to “lose the hubris that allowed me to think that I was invincible” as “mental illness is decoupled from physical strength and prowess”. He expressed a desire that senior leaders display the moral courage to model help-seeking behaviour, and that the ADF execute better on the existing goodwill, intent, and resources. Grant Edwards APM, Ex-AFP and now Service Ambassador for Soldier On, joined us in person to share some of the harrowing work that led to his diagnosed mental illnesses and his journey since. Grant would like to see more support for families, as they will often see the

changes in a person, as well as suffer from the effects. Finally, via a pre-recorded speech, Tyson Muir, Ex-ADF and now Operations Manager for Sapper Group, told of his struggles with a sense of loss, survivor guilt, PTSD, and substance abuse, and then of the purpose he has found on his road to recovery.

Julieann Keyser, Translational Research Manager, Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF), as keynote speaker, outlined six years of research done around transition and reintegration, with the aim being prediction and prevention. This led to the development of evidence-based online tools, starting with the self-reporting Military Civilian Adjustment & Reintegration Measure (M-CARM), which is free to use. Following the measurement, a veteran and/or their family can use the personalised self-directed learning program, Go Beyond, navigating life beyond service.

The symposium featured a Q & A discussion moderated by Karen Contencin. Panellists were Dr Katelyn Kerr (Lead Clinical Psychologist, Toowong Private Hospital Day Programs), Dr Angela Maguire (Clinical Psychologist & Principal Research Fellow, Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation), Steve Turnbull (Regional Manager of Online Services, Mates4Mates), Jenny Walker (Independent Director, Australian War Widows Queensland, and Member of Veterans Review Board), and Grant Edwards APM, Service Ambassador, Soldier On.





The outcomes of the symposium included advice from the psychologists that moral injury/trauma should not be pathologised, as it is about transgressing your internal moral frameworks - and having strong values should not be seen as 'wrong'. We also learnt that debriefings soon after traumatic events, where the scenario is rehashed, can increase the likelihood of developing PTSD. Instead, current evidence dictates a stepped care approach, starting with screening for risk factors. Then, as an individual, you should allow your brain up to three months to process the happenings, which can result in a healing effect. It is important during this period to use good self-care, and to not mentally avoid the issue by using substances to 'block it out'. More generally, within the ADF there needs to be a cultural shift that allows people to say they are not OK and be genuinely supported without negative reprisals.

A recurring theme was that the ADF need to do a better job of helping veterans and families navigate and access the best support services for them. With family members often first to see symptoms of mental health problems, they need to know how they can assist, as often the sufferer will not be aware or not willing to accept help. Anecdotally we know that with a plethora of service organisations and resources for the Defence community in the civilian world, as well as military systems of care, it can be overwhelming. A good starting point would be well-directed funding for implementation research to

provide evidence-based options for how best to integrate fragmented systems of care.

Lastly, a word on transitioning - Transition is rarely linear, and veterans should not be too hard on themselves. However perhaps they could reassess their attitude to the value of roles in the civilian world. The panel stressed that gaining meaning and purpose through employment or regular volunteer work, along with making social connections with those outside of the military, can be very helpful.

John Lewis, President of the Defence Force Welfare Association (Qld), expertly steered the event as MC. The symposium was well patronised as, aside from those attending in person, there were 220 views via the Facebook livestream. Afterwards, many people took the time to write to the MHFA praising the event quality and scope. The MHFA thanks all the speakers and panellists who gave of their time and themselves, and all attendees for their participation.

Susan Warby
Project Coordinator
QLD

28
October
2021



**Mental Health
Symposium on Post
Pandemic Recovery:
Challenges, Resilience
and Religion**

**Adelaide Town Hall
10:00 pm – 12:00 pm**

In-person / Virtual





We extend our gratitude to John Mannion, Mental Health Commissioner SA, Dr Barry Manuel, Baptist Pastor, Sheikh Helmi Bakhour, The Imam of Adelaide City Mosque and Mr Dilip Chirmuley, Hindu Priest for enlightening the audience with their keynote addresses.

This event was extremely successful with in-person attendance of 50 and Facebook live reach of 478, bringing the total reach to 528. We were keen for this event to be interactive and the panel discussion was fundamental to this. The panel members comprising of the Mental Health Commissioner and religious representatives, took several questions from the audience. There was a lot of learning and exchanging of information.

Last but not the least we would like to thank our partners Australian Federation of Islamic Council (AFIC), Buddha House and Multifaith Association of South Australia for their support and participation in the event.

Future recommendations include increasing the number of partners, bringing in people with lived experience and psychologists to talk on mental health, and to provide viable solutions.

Priyanka Ananthkrishna

Project Officer

South Australia

The Mental Health Symposium on Post Pandemic Recovery: Challenges, Resilience and Religion was held on the 28th of October at Adelaide Town Hall. We were thrilled to have hear the encouraging words of support from Hon. Stephen Wade, Minister for Health and Wellbeing and Mr Chris Picton, Shadow Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Our thanks are also extended to all our attendees who supported the event and for their feedback.

The aim of the symposium was to discuss post-pandemic recovery, challenges and resilience. The symposium also focussed on discussing the relationship between religion and mental health. We had a great line up of speakers who were well suited to talk around the title of the symposium.



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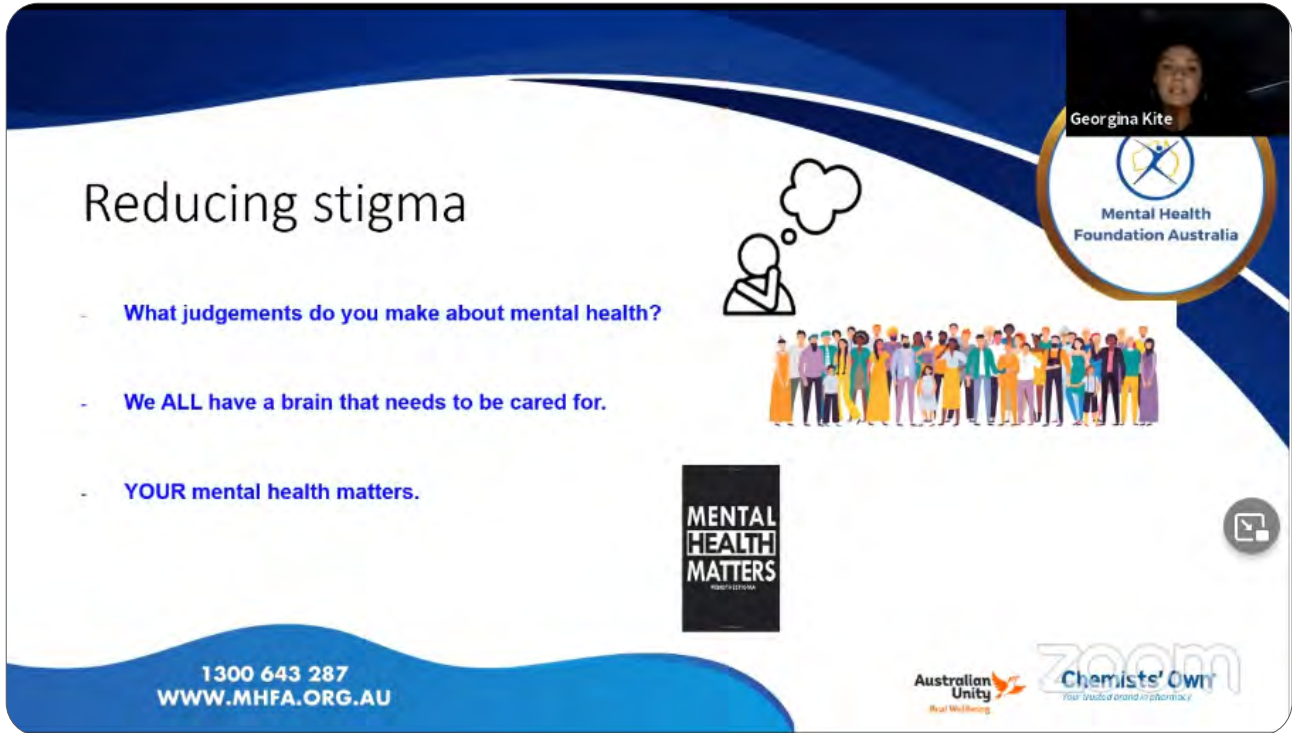


Future Leaders Forum

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Virtual





The MHFA's Future Leaders are a passionate group of individuals dedicated to advocating for youth mental health in the community. The aim of this event was for the MHFA's Future Leaders to discuss different topics surrounding youth mental health. This event was very successful, having reached more than 500 individuals through Zoom and Facebook.

The presenting Future Leaders were Allie Jokic, Georgina Kite, Azraf Ezaz, Alannah Debono, Brintha Brammananth, Claire Oberdorfer, Emily Ryan, Gautham Sriram, Smriti Maniskandan, Risa Narsinh, Sanuki Fernando, Breanna Colvin, Elly Chamberlain, Parsa Heydari and Amanda Feng. Our Future Leaders discussed topics such as the mental health and mental illness, early intervention and prevention, self-care, terminology, culture and mental health, rural mental health, individual differences and

supports for teens. Our dedicated Future Leaders worked very hard to put this event together over the past year and we congratulate them on this achievement.

We would also like to thank Aakriti Malhotra and Aarushi Malhotra for being our Master of Ceremonies, Carole Cream, MHFA Patron, The Hon. Matthew Guy MP, Leader of the Opposition and Georgia Maling, Coach/Client Connect Specialist Mental Health, Independent & Assisted Living, at Australian Unity for joining us at this important event.

Aneka Srinivasan

Project Lead
Victoria

30
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2021

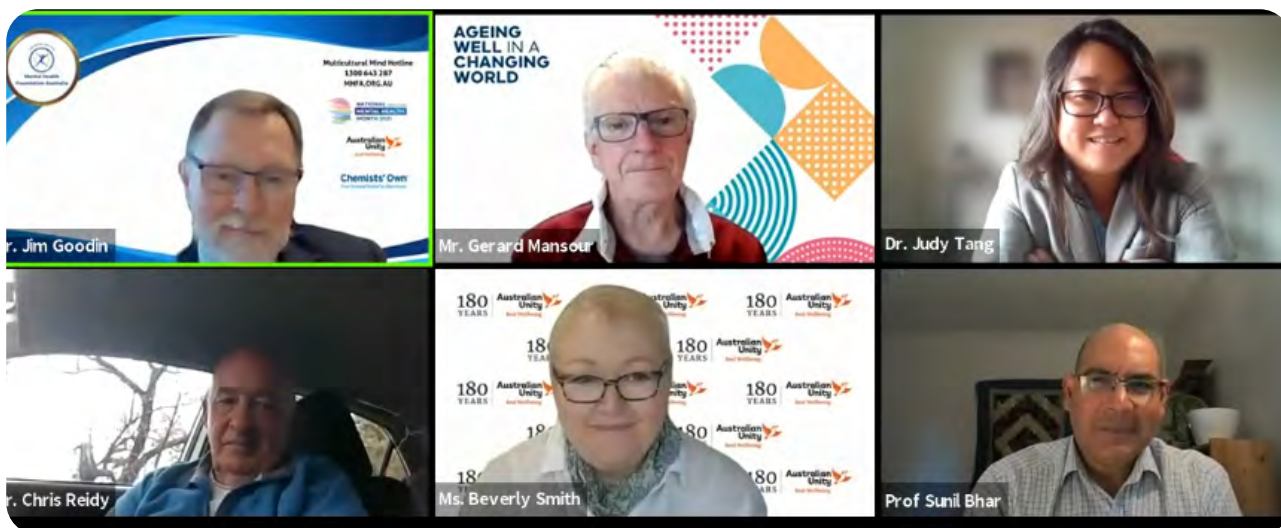


Seniors Mental Health Forum

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Virtual





On the 30th of October, MHFA hosted a Seniors Mental Health Forum. This event was an extension of our Seniors Mental Health Forum hosted during National Mental Health Month 2020. Particularly with the light shed on Australia's Aged Care scene, discussing this topic was all the more important.

Speakers at the event included Vasan Srinivasan, MHFA Chairperson, Jim Goodin, MHFA Vice Chairperson, Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Senior Victorians, Dr. Judy Tang, Clinical; Neuropsychologist, Ms. Beverly Smith, EGM Residential Communities, Independent & Assisted Living, Australian Unity, Prof. Sunil Bhar, Professor of Psychology at Swinburne University of Technology and co-director of the Wellbeing Clinic for Older Adults, Chris Reidy, Seniors Festival Manager and Bruce Wong, CEO Foot Solutions.

This event was very successful, having reached over 250 individuals across Zoom and Facebook. Speakers touched

on many important points and raised recommendations around the importance of maintaining social and family connection for seniors, identifying signs of elder abuse and differences between healthy and pathological ageing. A future suggestion may be to host this event within aged care facilities to discuss mental health needs specifically within these settings, and also what is required to change to better support our Seniors.

Felicity Mackin

Project Officer
VIC

30
October
2021



Gala Dinner 2021 **- Queensland**

Islamic College
of Brisbane

6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Virtual & In-person





The inaugural Gala Dinner in Queensland was a wonderful way to wrap up National Mental Health Month 2021. Organised by MHFA's Qld Multicultural Ambassadors, the night was a vibrant, colourful and joyous celebration. We saw the coming together of people from many different cultural backgrounds, all with the good intention of supporting better mental health in our local communities. A delicious 3-course meal was shared, while lively entertainment was provided by talented Russian, Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese, and Indian performers.

Thank you to Aunty Peggy Tidyman, Gunggari Elder, for her Acknowledgement of Country. The MHFA also extend our thanks to Amber Jane Powson, Miss Voluptuous Australia 2021, for sharing her lived experience of mental illness and her road to recovery.

Approximately 200 people attended the Gala Dinner, and the event reach was extended through livestreaming with 248 Facebook Live views. The month ended as it began, with the beautiful music of Master Rudrodipto Roy.

Due to the generosity of many, funds were raised through an auction and raffle. The MHFA also thank the sponsors of the Gala Dinner 2021 Queensland: Gandhi Salt March Ltd, Goss Refrigerated Transport, India News, Islamic Care Qld (ICare), Islamic College of Brisbane, Leaders By Design, Love n Care, New Build Qld, Star Promotional Products, and The Women's Mentoring Foundation.

Proceeds from the event will be disbursed to mental health services in Queensland in 2022 through the MHFA's small grants program.

Susan Warby

Project Coordinator
QLD

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October
2021

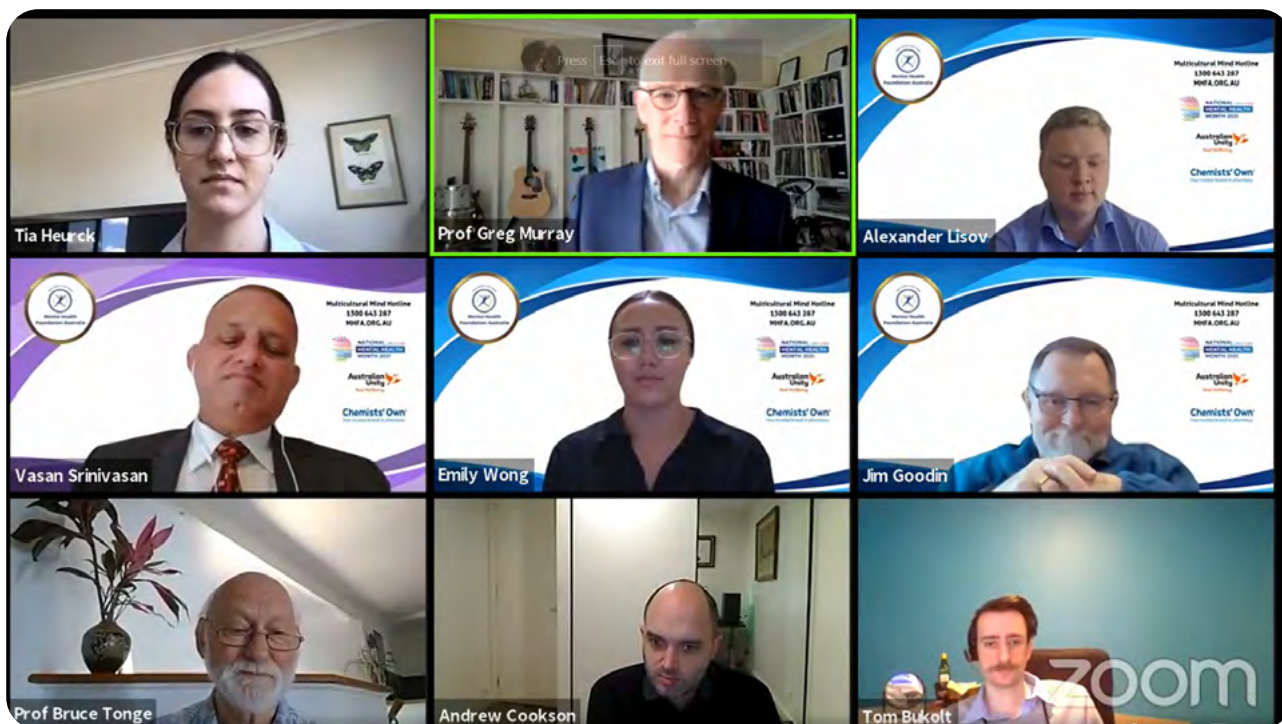


Need for Integrated Mental Health Hubs

10:00 am – 11:30 am

Virtual





On the final day of National Mental Health Month 2021, the MHFA engaged in very important discussions surrounding the establishment of Integrated Mental Health Hubs. It was identified that hubs such as this can service the ‘missing middle’ of consumers who often go without help in the traditional mental health system. Members of our Youth Policy and Publications Committee also joined in this discussion, providing their important perspectives. A recommendation of setting up this hub arose from MHFA’s Youth Mental Health Forum conducted at Deakin University in 2018, and it was also recommended as part of Victoria’s Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Speakers in this event included Abi Srinivasan, Master of Ceremonies, Prof. Greg Murray, Director of the Centre for Mental Health Swinburne University, Vasan Srinivasan, MHFA Chairperson, Jim Goodin, MHFA Vice Chairperson, Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge, MHFA Patron, Alexander Lisov, MHFA Policy and Publications Committee, Emily Wong, , MHFA Policy and Publications Committee, Tia Van Heurck, MHFA Policy and Publications Committee, Tom Bukolt, MHFA Policy and Publications Committee and

Andrew Cookson, Lived experience speaker.

Speakers touched on the advantages of establishing such a facility. The MHFA noted that it was putting together plans and that there are many factors to consider. Questions around suitable locations for the hub, how to attract youth, digital service delivery, evaluations of the hub’s services, partnerships with support services and more were raised and nuanced discussions around this were engaged in.

Similar facilities internationally were discussed looking at what can be incorporated into an Australian hub. The social connection and wellbeing perspective was highlighted, emphasising that the Hub can be much more than a clinical setting which provides counselling. The MHFA looks forward to continuing these discussions to finally open a hub of our own.

At the conclusion of this event, Emeritus Professor Bruce Tonge, Patron of MHFA summarised and closed National Mental Health Month 2021, reflecting on the many events, learnings and highlights. He emphasised the reachout of



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30 Oct - Seniors Mental Health Forum

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29 Oct - Future Forum

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28 Oct - Defence and Mental Health Symposium

12 views • 3 weeks ago



1:59:18

28 Oct - Mental Health Symposium on Post...

3 views • 3 weeks ago

DIGNITARIES WHO ATTENDED NMHM 2021

MINISTERS:

The Hon Peter Dutton MP – Minister for Home Affairs

The Hon. Alan Tudge – Minister for Education and Youth

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP

The Hon. Bill Johnston MLA - Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Industrial Relations (WA)

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Julian Hill MP

Emma Kealy MP

Hon. Emma Davidson MLA

Hon. Matthew Guy MP

Emma McBride MP

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck - Minister for Sport, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services

Terry Young MP

Ros Bates MP

Amanda Camm MP

MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS:

Lord Mayor Sally Capp – City of Melbourne

Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor – City of Adelaide

Lord Mayor Clover Moore - City of Sydney

Cr Vicki Howard – City of Brisbane

DIGNITARIES

A/Prof Avril Brereton

A/Prof Petra Buergelt

A/Prof. Caroline Bell

A/Prof. Eva Kyndt

A/Prof. Mahesh Jayaram

A/Prof. Viven Holmes

Aakriti Malhotra

Aarushi Malhotra

Abinaya Srinivasan

Alex Greenwich MP

Alexander Lisov

Alison Lamb

Andeli Zuzic

Andrew Braddock

Andrew Cookson

Angela Wiseman

Anthony Carbines

Ashish Kumar

Ashok Mysore

Aunty Peggy Tidyman

Beverly Smith

Brad Pearce

Carla Duncan

Carmela Scaffidi

Chris Blanden QC

Chris Reidy

Christina Chia

Christopher Phoenix

Cristina Magbojos

Curtis Ruhнау

Daniel Sundahl

Daniela Priekopa

Danielle Baldock

Daryl Williams QC

David Mann

Dee Fraser

Desi Vlahos

Dr Amanda Ferguson

Dr Anthony Foster

Dr Asiel Adan Sanchez

Dr Barry Manuel

Dr Bastian Seidel

Dr Bronwyn Gresham

Dr Chris Dalton

Dr Dawn D'Amico

Dr Debra Bath

Dr Elizabeth Moore

Dr Elizabeth Pritchard

Dr Ferdinal Fernando

Dr Jeannie Yoo

Dr Judy Tang

Dr Laura Fruhen

Dr Michelle Sharpe

Dr Nancey Huang

Dr Nathan Gibson

Dr Shalini Arunogiri

Dr Sudipto Chatterjee

Dr Tony Sara

Dr Vanessa Lee-AhMat

Dr. Chris Mogan

Dr. Raj Khillan

Dr. Ravi Kamisetty

Dr. Sivaram Vemuri

Elizabeth Koff

Elle Thorne

Elleni Bereded-Samuel

Emeritus Prof Bruce Tonge

Emily Fraser

Emily Wong

Fadil Bahadoor

Fiona McLeay

Flic Manning

Georgia Lowth

Georgia Maling

Gerard Mansour

Hayriye Uluca

Hetty Johnston AM

Hon. Anne Ferguson

Jae Fraser

James Seow

Jane Monica-Jones

Janelle Buick

Janet Lowndes

Jasmine Wolfe

Jeremy Forbes

Jessica Velevska

Jessie De Bono

Jim Beer

Joel Delaney

Thank
you all



Johanna Metcalf
John Jackson
Josh Sacks
Josie Sorban
Joy Rahab Sinclair
Justin Abrahams
Justine Muller
Karthick Thanigaimani
Kathrine Morgan-Wicks
Kay Dunkley
Kelly Dixon
Kevin McCoy
Kieran Bowie
Kwame Selormey
Latha Srinivasan
Leaders By Design
Lil Gordon
Lucia Hou
Lucinda Brogden
Lyndal Denny
Malini Raj
Marc Bryant
Martin Krivosija
Matthew Austin
Matthew Dale
Matthew Jackman
Matty Wright
Meagan Goodes
Meena Vageesh
Michael Pecic
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Stuart Taylor
Theone van Der Merwe
Tia Heurck
Tom Bukolt
Tracee Blythe
Treasure Jennings
Vaishali Budige
Vanita Dahia
Varshini Viswanath
Veronica Hogan
Vicki McCoy

Zac Palexas

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– University of Otago
A/Prof. Eva Kyndt
– Swinburne University
A/Prof. Viven Holmes
– Australian National University
Dr Bronwyn Gresham
– RMIT University
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Infosys
Pharmacist Support Services
Pharmacy Guild
Queensland Health
Relationships Australia
Sapper Group
Veterans Care Association

2021 MENTAL HEALTH AWARD WINNERS

VIC

- Organisation Of The Year - School Tv
- Volunteer Of The Year - Leonie Neylon
- Youth Of The Year - Tyler Steyr

NSW

- Advocate Of The Year - Susana Bluwol
- Volunteer Of The Year - Erin Pogmore
- Senior Of The Year - Kerry O'Malley
- Youth Of The Year - Emily Unity

QLD

- Advocate Of The Year - Bronwen Edwards
- Organisation Of The Year - Roses In The Ocean
- Volunteer Of The Year - Habib Jamal

WA

- Advocate Of The Year - Nick Hudson
- Organisation Of The Year - Altius Group

TAS

- Advocate Of The Year - Jeff Milkins

ACT

- Advocate Of The Year - Purity Goj

2021 CONSUMER ART COMPETITION WINNERS

1. Lee Ruth Hirsh, 'Finding your Voice' (1st Prize)
2. Chloe Gonzalez, 'Covid won't knock me down' (2nd prize)
3. Hsin Lin, 'May Your Days Be Filled With Light - Flowering Gum' (3rd prize)

2021 CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION WINNERS

VIC

- Upper Primary (Year 5-6) - Zac Palexas
- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Bronte Pringle
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Alyssa Wong

NSW

- Upper Primary (Year 5-6) - Kulmehar Sidhu

- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Kh Tasnim Hassan
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Charlotte Tan

QLD

- Upper Primary (Year 5-6) - Sofia Anna Cortenbach
- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Ruby Collins
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Lara Rackham

WA

- Lower Secondary (7-9) - Erin Johnson
- Upper Secondary (10-12) - Stefi Susan Binu

SA

- Senior Secondary (10-12) - Jemimah Rose Hay

TAS

- Upper Primary (5-6) - Nina Hasdell

AV SUPPORT

Nithya Viswanathan

MULTICULTURAL AMBASSADORS 2021

Abegail Juson
Abinaya Srinivasan
Adam Goh
Aida Garcia
Alex Sy
Ali Riza Kasapgil
Amiel Nubaha
Amit Mehta
Ana Garcia
Anania Tagaro
Ania Svorad

Thank
you all



Anil Advaney
Anju Duggal
Anthea Balfour
Anupa Koli
Arlene Lucas
Arnab Ghosh Roy
Arshdeep Singh Ishar
Aruna Sampath Hewagama
Ashima Soni
Ashish Kumar
Ashok Sherwal
Ashveen Chand
Avijit Bose
Bernard Raffaut
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Bina Shah
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Hannah Dube
Harlin Gandhok
Hayfa Bakour
Hayriye Uluca
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Kevin Walsh
Kevin Cheng
Khin Caroline Soe
Krina Shah
Krishneel Maharaj
Kush Shrestha
Kwabena Ansah
Kylie Pearsall

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Layla Al
Leyla Adan
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Lily Sarkar
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Matthew Keisoglu
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Michelle Jenkins
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Narasimhan Viswanathan
Narasimhan Ravi
Nasrin Sadegh-Vaziri
Neeraj Nanda
Nicole Perez
Nige Jones
Nildhara Gadani
Nitesh Vyas
Norma Falconer
Ommar Sint
Pathik Mehta
Patricia Whitelaw
Paul Peulich
Paul Machuki
Penny Antonopoulos
Peter Cinzah
Philip Tan
Poonam Arora
Pradip Gorasia
Prakruthi Gururaj
Prathiti Shah
Preetham Krishnappa
Priyanka Gahlot
Prue Cutts
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Shrey Baluja
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Smriti Jhunjunwala
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Sonia Di Mezza
Sonia Sadiq Gandhi
Sonia Minniecon
Sridivya Naidu
Stacey Mendes
Stephanie Panagopoulos
Steve Novak

Thank
you all



Subramanian Kannan
Subrata Saha
Sudharma Hiremath
Sudipto Roy
Sunny Duggal
Surendra Prasad
Suresh Marcandan
Sury Soni
Swarnali Sikder
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Stephanie King
Tharuki Delpa Chitra

Thank
you all

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Aakriti Malhotra
Aarushi Malhotra
Abi Srinivasan
Aida Garcia
Aneka Srinivasan
Ashish Kumar
Carla Duncan
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Malini Raj
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Ritika Purang
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Vaishali Budige
Varshini Viswanath
Vasan Srinivasan

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Australian Football League – AFL
Australian Unity

Bollywood Dance School Australia
Brisbane Lions FC
Chemists Own
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Whole Food Nutrition
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India News
South Asia Times
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Mr Adam Goh – Media Officer

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Ms Edith Tonge

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Ms Lubna Irfan (Zoraiz Studios)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ms Nithya Viswanathan
Mr Sagar Hirasave
Mr Subra Ramachandran

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH SUPPORTERS

The Mental Health Foundation Australia appreciates that we achieve our objectives with the ongoing support of our many partner organisations and we greatly value the relationships we have with many services and individuals.







The Future

A consumer survey was conducted post-National Mental Health Month. In this survey, an overwhelming 100% of respondents stated that they would happily participate in National Mental Health Month 2021 and beyond, therefore giving National Mental Health Month 2021 the tick of approval. There was also much praise heaped on the Foundation's effort to organise events nationally across the month. The overall rating of National Mental Health Month 2021 was 8.9/10 which is a fantastic achievement. The most significant representation by region during National Mental Health Month 2021 was from Victoria, followed by Queensland, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory. The most significant age group participating in National Mental Health Month 2021 were those aged between 19-34 followed by 45-70 and 35-54. Finally, the majority of participants were notified of National Mental Health Month events via email, and social media platforms.



Wrap Up of National Mental Health Month

Prof Bruce Tonge
Patron, MHFA



1300 643 287
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**DON'T MISS PARTICIPATING IN
NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
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For more info:
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E admin@mhfa.org.au
W www.mhfa.org.au

