

FRIDAY, 14 APRIL, 2023

Beyond Blue says mental health should feature strongly in the Measuring What Matters approach

Beyond Blue is calling for mental health and mental wellbeing to feature strongly in the Federal Government's new framework that aims to accurately gauge and understand how people's lives are tracking in Australia.

The government is developing a Measuring What Matters Statement and Australian Wellbeing Framework to discuss how Australia might measure its success as a nation in ways that go beyond traditional economic indicators such as productivity and growth.

In its submission, Beyond Blue states mental health is central to overall wellbeing and national prosperity.

Beyond Blue recommends mental health and mental wellbeing indicators are included in the national framework to better measure overall wellbeing, due to the significant impact our mental health has on the way we live.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said the framework was a chance to consider how social conditions influence our mental health and wellbeing.

"The framework must include ways to measure and better understand how employment, housing, racism, discrimination, and social inequality impact people's mental health and wellbeing in Australia," Ms Harman said.

"And it must be based on thorough consultation with communities, especially those experiencing mental health conditions and suicidal thoughts, and people impacted by homelessness, unemployment, racism, and poverty,

"Good wellbeing frameworks explore questions not usually asked by governments.

"Our submission argues that the measurement of wellbeing cannot simply be a 'spray on' collection of data on existing activity but should be a carefully considered strategy that measures the foundations of wellbeing – such as financial distress, social isolation, and discrimination," Ms Harman said.

Beyond Blue also recommends the Federal Government commits to meaningful long-term change by embedding the framework into future decision-making processes, as has happened in New Zealand and France.

"The framework has the potential to lead to more informed and transparent policy-making that drives positive, healthy intergenerational change," Ms Harman said.

"Done right, the government's framework will help guide efforts to prevent mental health issues, reduce their impacts and ensure evidence-informed decisions help target funding towards actions that improve health equity."

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Beyond Blue Support Service: 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au/getsupport