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## Beyond Blue backs Productivity Commission push for focus on prevention

**Beyond Blue has welcomed the Productivity Commission's recommendation for a national prevention investment framework that would create an ongoing and stable investment vehicle for a healthier, thriving Australia.**

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO said adopting the recommendation in the Productivity Commission's Interim Report on Delivering Quality Care More Efficiently, would be a gamechanger.

"Powering up prevention is good for people, good for business and good for the economy," Ms Harman said.

"Beyond Blue has long advocated for greater investment in prevention and earlier support options in mental health and wellbeing. We can think of no better way to improve Australian's quality of life and ability to contribute to the economy than stopping people getting unwell in the first place.

"And given mental health and physical health are weaved intricately together, the positive ripple effects on broader health – but also education, housing, work and relationships – would be profound.

"It takes time to prove that prevention works. The proposed long-term funding mechanism and government co-contribution and governance model, together with an assessment and evaluation mindset, would lay a different path from the current short-termism and disconnected programmatic funding approach.

"It would mean more people can live a contributing life, preventing the onset and deterioration of mental health issues and comorbid chronic diseases, keeping people in jobs, driving down loneliness and driving up community connection, and, over time reducing demand for more costly acute services," Ms Harman added.

"Beyond Blue works every day to make it easier for people to feel better earlier, get well and stay well, and with our sector colleagues, we have argued for an increase in prevention funding to reflect the human, social and economic impact of poor mental health on people, families, workplaces and communities."

Ms Harman added that in the interim, the drafting of a new, more dynamic National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement should not be delayed in the interest of long overdue reforms that would support the nation's health and improve participation and productivity.

"The Productivity Commission has estimated that poor mental health and suicide cost the Australian economy up to \$70 billion a year, with over half stemming from reduced workforce participation and productivity. Despite this, Australia continues to underinvest in community-based prevention and early

intervention compared to acute care, which does little to address the root causes of productivity loss,” Ms Harman said.

**Beyond Blue’s Support Service** is free and available 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 and via web chat or email [www.beyondblue.org.au/support](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/support)

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For more information or to arrange an interview with Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO contact Maureen Devlin at [media@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:media@beyondblue.org.au) or 0404 853 764.