

24 September 2025

Beyond Blue teams up with *Just a Farmer* for rural mental health

Beyond Blue is proud to announce the appointment of Leila McDougall, farmer, filmmaker, and mental health advocate, as Campaign Ambassador for Farming and Rural Communities as part of the *Just a Farmer Regional Screening Project*.

Leila's appointment to the campaign reflects a strong and genuine alignment with Beyond Blue's mission to support mental health in farming and rural communities, in addition to supporting small business owners who live and work in rural and regional Australia. As both a farmer and the creator and lead actress of the feature film *Just a Farmer*, Leila brings lived experience and authenticity to her advocacy. She understands firsthand the pressures of financial uncertainty, isolation, and mental health challenges that often affect farmers, their communities and rural small business owners.

"Living and working in a rural community, I've seen how mental health struggles can go unnoticed or unspoken," says Leila McDougall.

"Through *Just a Farmer*, I wanted to start conversations that matter and genuinely reflect what life is like on the farm and for rural communities.

"As a Beyond Blue ambassador for farming and rural communities, I'm proud to help to continue to break down stigma and encourage people to seek support. Beyond Blue is there for farmers and rural communities and offers support such as NewAccess for Small Business Owners (NASBO) – a free and confidential service, tailored to the realities of farming and small business life. It's exactly what our communities need."

The NASBO program offers free, confidential mental health coaching designed specifically for small business owners, including farmers and agricultural operators, without the need for a GP referral. It supports early intervention for work and life pressures, helping individuals feel better, get well, and stay well.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman welcomed Leila's appointment in the campaign, saying: "Leila's deep connection to rural life and firsthand understanding of the challenges faced by farmers and communities in rural and regional Australia make her an invaluable voice in this campaign.

"Leila's compassion and commitment to mental health align perfectly with Beyond Blue's mission to support Australians wherever they live and work. Together, we can help encourage open conversations around mental health to reduce stigma and ensure more people can access the support they need, when they need it."

Leila's regional tour of her film, *Just a Farmer*, traverses themes of mental health, suicide, resilience, and the realities of rural life, making it deeply relevant to Beyond Blue's mission to support people wherever they are in Australia. The film, which Leila is currently touring across regional Australia, offers a unique opportunity to engage local audiences, spark meaningful conversations, and promote the free support that is available in communities where support is often limited but urgently needed.

Her voice will resonate with the communities Beyond Blue seeks to support, helping to foster a culture of openness, resilience, and early intervention in regional Australia.

For details on how to request a screening of Just a Farmer visit www.vampaddockproductions.com/contact
To view the current nationwide screening schedule, visit
www.vampaddockproductions.com/communityscreenings

For more information about the NASBO program or to access support, visit beyondblue.org.au or call 1300 945 301. The **Beyond Blue Support Service** is free and available 24/7, call **1300 22 4636** or beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

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Available for interviews:

- Leila McDougall - farmer, filmmaker, and mental health advocate, Campaign Ambassador for Farming and Rural Communities as part of the *Just a Farmer Regional Screening Project*
- Beyond Blue spokesperson

For media enquiries, contact Maureen Devlin at maureen.devlin@beyondblue.org.au or call 0404 853 764