



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

Preventive Mental Health Conference 2026

‘Doing Better – Working together to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of people in Australia.’

Tuesday 24 to Wednesday 25 March 2026
Novotel Parramatta
Parramatta (Sydney)/Dharug Country, NSW

Printable Program

Last updated 6 February 2026



Time	Room	Session
8:00am – 5:00pm	Atrium	Conference Registration Open
8:00am – 5:00pm	Atrium	Exhibition Open
9:00am – 10:30am	Lennox Ballroom & Plenary Hub	Opening Plenary - How do we move mental health promotion and prevention from niche to mainstream? Welcome to Country – Linda Sainsbury Introductory Remarks – Suzanne Dick, CEO, Prevention United Opening Address – The Hon. Emma McBride, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health Australian Government Session Chair: Dr. Stephen Carbone
10:30am – 11:00am	Atrium	Morning Tea & Exhibition
	Madison Room	SYPPH Networking Meet and Greet – Registration recommended <i>This informal meet and greet session is designed for students and early-career professionals to connect with peers, meet fellow attendees, and find a conference buddy to explore sessions and networking opportunities together.</i>

Time	Room	Session
11:00am – 12:30pm	Lennox Ballroom & Plenary Hub	<p>Plenary Session 2</p> <p>Session Chair: To be announced</p> <p>Keynote Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote 1 Speaker: Dr. Suzanne (Ethsi) L. Stewart, PhD, C.Psych, Professor and Director, University of Toronto • Keynote 2 Speaker: Associate Professor Clinton Schultz, Director First Nations Strategy and Partnerships, Black Dog Institute • Keynote 3 Speaker: Professor Patricia Dudgeon, Professor, The University of Western Australia <p>Those keynote presentations will be followed by a panel discussion and Q&A with the keynotes.</p>
<p>12:30pm– 1:30pm Atrium & Restaurant Lunch & Exhibition</p>		

Time	Concurrent Session 1	
Session Name & Room	Presentation Title	Speakers
1A - Together from the Start: Strengthening Early Foundations (Long Orals) Lennox Ballroom	Keeping Kids Connected: Embedding Social-Emotional Learning and Child-Safety Education into Australian schools	Mrs Rita Maher
	Evaluation of the Queensland Ed-LinQ Program Connecting Schools and Mental Health Services	Mrs Claire Fairley Dr Elena Swift Dr Clea Headley
	Helping young adults in Western Australia find their way to okay	Miss Rebecca Salsano Miss Sophie Hammond
	Australian primary schools' perspectives on student wellbeing priorities and program adoption influences	Dr Rebecca Hodder
	Mentally Health Schools: promoting mental health and wellbeing	Professor Sharyn Burns

	Adolescent mental health and prevention: findings from the Future Proofing Study	Dr Lyndsay Brown
	Young and Wise: Embedding Youth Voice in Health Policy and Advocacy	Ms. Sarah Lake
1B - Shaping Stronger Systems (Long Orals) Madison Room	To what degree is primary prevention included in Australian mental health policies?	Dr Jaelea Skehan
	The importance of everyday actions on mental health: The Big 5 Framework	Professor Nick Titov
	Neighbourhood social fragmentation and psychological distress among middle-aged Australians: A longitudinal study	Mr Vincent Learnihan
	From Fragmentation to Collaboration: The Local Model for Mental Health & Wellbeing	Ms Emma Grose Ms Rebecca Ponchard
	Enhancing lifelong wellbeing through a systems approach to building capacity and capability	Ms Sophie Morson
	Reversing the creep: Should we reassess our approach to mental health literacy?	Ms Maja Havrilova
	Structural prevention: can alienation be reduced under capitalism?	Dr Julia Anaf
1C - Learning from Diversity to Drive Prevention (Long Orals) Linden Room	Climate Crisis and Indigenous Youth Mental Health: Identifying Preventions and Solutions	Dr Suzanne Stewart Mr. Keith McCrady Mr. Shiva Acharya
	Building Mentally Healthy Communities: Co-Designing Scalable Psychosocial Supports Outside the NDIS	Ms Emily Wolter
	A scoping review of Indigenous children's social and emotional wellbeing initiatives	Ms Danielle Cameron
	Deadly Minds: Embedding Mindfulness Movement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing	Mrs Charlene Carlisle Mrs Sharnell Avery
	Storying BlaQ cultural determinants of health	Professor Jen Evans
	My Story Cards: A Culturally Grounded Visual Tool for Exploring Well-Being	Ms Jude Page
	Place-Based Prevention: Systems Thinking in Rural Youth Mental Health Promotion	Mr Jeremy Wiggins
1D - Strengthening Wellbeing at Every Age (Long Orals) Avalon Room	Postnatal group therapy for anxiety and depression – treatment and prevention?	Dr Jessica Appleton
	Parenting as a Team: Stronger Partnerships, Thriving Families, Happier Kids	Ms Elizabeth Neal
	The Silent Identity Shift in Motherhood: A Lived Experience Lens	Mrs Lambrina Gimian
	Seeing Multiple Systems Clearly: Mapping Diverse Lived Experiences of Mental Wellbeing	Mr Matt Healey
	Mental Health Impacts of Stressful Life Events in Older Australians Over Time	Mr. Md. Mahmudul Hasan Sagar
	Working Beyond the Traditional Retirement Age and Health in Later Life	Mr. Md. Mahmudul Hasan Sagar
	Moving Minds and Bodies: Addressing Loneliness and Depression in Seniors through Dance	Ms Gwen Korebits
1E – Workshop 1 Jarrah Room	Title: Prevention in Action: Nothing for Us Without Us	
Space limited! Registration free but mandatory - Only available to face-to-	Hosted by: Prevention United	
	Facilitated by: Ms. Hong Hanh (Hani) Nguyen, Community Engagement Lead - Prevention United, and Ms. Helen Jeong, Volunteer Coordinator - Reach Out	
	Presenters include:	

face conference delegates

- Em Howells, Youth Advisory Group member - Prevention United
- Binusha Pathirana, Youth Advisory Group member - Prevention United
- Jasmine Toronis, Youth Advisory Group member - Prevention United
- William Cook, Youth Advocate - ReachOut
- Maddie Doudney, Youth Advocate - ReachOut
- Georgia Evans, Youth Advocate – ReachOut
- Tessa Mithieux, Senior Manager of Media and Government Relations, ReachOut

3:00pm – 3:30pm	Afternoon Tea & Exhibition	Atrium
------------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------

Time	Room	Session
3:30pm – 5:00pm	Lennox Ballroom & Plenary Hub	<p>Plenary Session 3 - Safety by Design: A Foundation for Preventing Mental Health Concerns</p> <p>Session Chair: Dr. Jaelea Skehan OAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keynote 1 Speaker: Professor Jo Robinson AM, Head of Youth Suicide Prevention Research, Orygen• Keynote 2 Speaker: Mr Mark Oostergo, CEO & Principal Psychologist, APS• Keynote 3 • Speaker: Dr. Sarthak Gandhi, Board Youth Advisor, headspace <p>Followed by a panel discussion where the keynote speakers listed above will be joined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Anais Arrighi, Senior Advisor, eSafety Commissioner• Ms Esther McKay, Advisory Group Member, Everymind Lived Experience
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Atrium & Restaurant	<p>Welcome Reception & Exhibition</p>

Time	Room	Session
8:00am – 3:30pm	Ballroom Gallery	Conference Registration Open
8:00am – 3:30pm	Ballroom Gallery	Exhibition Open
9:00am – 10:30am	Lennox Ballroom & Plenary Hub	Plenary Session 4 - Can digital help us do better in prevention? What's working, what's not, what's next. Panel moderator: Mr Tom Mulvaney, Australasia Director Men's Health, Movember
		Panellists: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professor Nick Titov, Executive Director, MindSpot, Macquarie University 2. Ms Carlyn Christian, Director of Impact Campaigns, Movember 3. Dr. Addie Wootten, Director of Strategic Engagement, Smiling Mind 4. To be announced
10:30am – 11:00am	Atrium	Morning Tea & Exhibition

Time	Concurrent Session 2	
Session Name & Room	Presentation Title	Speakers
2A - Pathways to Wellbeing: Community Perspectives in Action (Rapid Fires) Lennox Ballroom	Building collaborative partnerships to promote mental health and wellbeing in the community	Prof Christina Pollard Ms Jess Nella
	Social Prescribing for Prevention: Connecting Communities to Build Mental Resilience	Dr. Shreya Anil Chauhan
	National survey of community attitudes to prevention of mental health problems	Associate Professor Amy Morgan
	5 Ways to Wellbeing, implementation within community health - health promotion setting	Mrs Natalia March (Smith) Mr Sebastian Goscha
	The postcode effect: Access to recreational spaces and adolescent mental health	Dr Scarlett Smout
	The Grit and Resilience Festival Community-led celebration of Connection & Mental Wellbeing	Mrs Bek Nash-Webster
	Good Policy, Poor Fit? What small-medium businesses need for mental health prevention	Ms Kristy Burns
	Let's Talk TACTICS: A Practical, Preventative Framework for Effective Communication	Ms Malinda Guest
	The contribution of crime to neighbourhood disadvantage and mental well-being, 2009-2016.	Ms Emily Davis

	Implementing a systemic approach to wellbeing promotion	Dr Matt Fisher
2B - Digger deeper: What is the evidence telling us? (Rapid Fires) Madison Room	Association Between Body Shape Index and Depression among Young Adults	Mr Tinsae Abeya Geleta
	Risk of neurodevelopmental disorders among preschool children of migrants and refugees	Mr Kh Shafiu Rahaman
	Mixed-method evaluation of structure, process and outcome of mental health crisis interventions	Dr Nazmul Huda
	Pharmacological/psychosocial interventions for children in out-of-home care with mental health difficulties	Dr Nazmul Huda
	From Data to Action: COVID-19's Impact on Child Wellbeing and Local Solutions	Dr Leona Pascoe
	Mental health and wellbeing programs currently being implemented in Australian primary schools	Dr Kate Bartlem
	Rethinking Mental Health Support for International Students	Ms Iga Morzynska
	Understanding Disordered Eating in Schools: Global Prevalence, Risk Factors, and Research-to-Practice Integration	Mrs Jessica Morgan Thi Ngoc-Anh Hoang
	Bridging Digital Gaps: Youth-Led Tech Mediation for Mental Health Equity	Dr. Shreya Anil Chauhan
	Depression and One-Carbon Metabolism: An Anthropogenetic Study in North India	Dr Gurjinder Kaur Brar
2C - The Future of Prevention: Insights, Signals, and Stories (Rapid Fires) Linden Room	Connecting Our Way	Professor Michelle Dickson
	Community stories of rural mental health - inspiring hope and overcoming adversity	Mrs Kate Arndell
	Picturing Well-Being: Using Visual Elicitation to Identify and Understand Well-Being Needs	Ms Jude Page
	Way to Wellness: Optimising emotional wellbeing while awaiting surgery	Miss Clare Pekin
	Trauma-Informed Mindful Breath, Movement & Music Meditation for Youth Mental Health	Ms Beata Heymann
	Building Collective Calm: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing of International Students	Dr Shweta Goyal
	Mental health service use after minor to moderate motor vehicle crash injuries	Miss Simone Yu
	"Safety planning" done better: A standardised cross-sector approach to supporting young Australians	Dr Stephen Spencer
	Evolution of the Act Belong Commit® campaign for population mental wellbeing	Prof Christina Pollard Ms Jess Nella
2D - Wider Voices, Bigger Change (Mixed Formats) Avalon Room	Be Nice to Brain - Preventing mental health harm from alcohol	Mr Cameron Banks
	Old School Night Out. Strengthening Rural Connection Through Music and Community	Mrs Bek Nash-Webster
	Investigating young adults' media mental health literacy: A questionnaire-based study	Ms Shi Dai
	Navigating the challenges of amplifying lived experience in mental health advocacy	Ms Jessica James
	Lost in Translation? Migrant Women's Experiences of Digital Perinatal Mental Health Resources	A/prof Jacqueline Boyle
	Addressing stigma in alcohol use in pregnancy and FASD: a scoping review	Miss Jessica Ravindran
	YouTube for Mental Health Promotion: Enhancing Equity, Engagement in Diverse Australian Communities	Ms Deena Mehjabeen
	Reality Psychology, a new paradigm for supporting preventive mental health	Associate Professor Stephen Mckenzie
	Why Causal Evidence on Child Maltreatment Demands a Re-prioritisation of Mental Health Investment	Dr Lucy Grummit
2E – Workshop 2 Jarrah Room	Title: What does effective preventive mental health look like in primary schools - and what will it take to scale it?	
	Hosted by: Smiling Mind	

Space limited! Registration free but mandatory - Only available to face-to-face conference delegates	Facilitated by: Dr. Addie Wootten, Director of Strategic Engagement, Smiling Mind Presenters include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Louise Birrell, Program Lead of Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing - The Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use NHMRC Emerging Leader Research Fellow - Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney • Dr. Simone Darling, Principal Research Fellow, Team Leader and Senior Program Manager - Murdoch Children's Research Institute • Dr. Addie Wootten, Director of Strategic Engagement - Smiling Mind • Dr. Ruth Aston, Senior Lecturer - School of Education Faculty of Arts, Business, Law and Economics, University of Adelaide
---	--

12:30pm – 1:30pm	Lunch & Exhibition	Atrium & Restaurant
-------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------

Time	Concurrent Session 3	
Session Name & Room	Presentation Title	Speakers
3A - Partnerships in Action: Designing Better Outcomes (Long Orals) Lennox Ballroom	Changing the Narrative: How Co-Design is Shifting Help-Seeking Behaviours Amongst Regional Men	Mrs Jo Drayton
	Co-designing Digital Support for Postnatal Mental Wellbeing: A Preventive, Strengths-Based Approach	Dr. Rebecca Liackman
	Tharlbarra Maga: Co-designing a culturally grounded mental health tool in Western Australia.	Dr Astrid Turner Ms Tara Merry Dr Nia Pulu
	A Case Study of Partnership to Address a Complex Determinant of Health	Ms Irene Verins
	Co-designing a Bangla Mental Health Sign Language Bank for Deaf Communities	Dr M Tasdik Hasan
	Communicating about suicide and mental health concerns: Partnering with impact across communities	Olivia De Pomeroy
	Her Mental Health Matters: Developing a mental health strategy for regional communities.	Ms Alison Jones
3B - Supporting the Next Generation: Effective Program Approaches (Long Orals) Madison Room	From Stories to Skills: What 12-14-Year-Olds Want from Mental Health Programs	Ms Genesis Lindstrom Ms Georgia Brindley
	Starting Safely: Embedding "ED Safe" approaches across the First 2000 Days	Ms Hilary Smith Ms Gabrielle Orr
	Nature-based programs for children impacted by family mental illness: The Regenerate program	Ms Inkah Fischer
	Preventing national mental health problems by improving tertiary student mental health	Associate Professor Stephen Mckenzie
	Being Heard, Connecting, Reflecting: Peer to Peer Story Sharing Amongst University Students	Mr. Ilan Alick Abrahams
	Adapting and evaluating a universal, school-based, LGBTQI+-inclusive, trauma-informed mental ill-health prevention program	Dr Louise Birrell

Wednesday 25 March 2026 – All times are AEDT (Parramatta time)

3C - Linking Systems, Unlocking Potential (Long Orals) Linden Room	The mental health promotion work of Australia's Suicide Prevention Networks	Dr Matt Fisher
	Prevention Through Connection: Embedding Nature and Trauma-Informed Practice into Public Mental Health	Ms Kit Kline
	Building Workforce Resilience: A Lived-Experience Approach to Preventing Burnout and Vicarious Trauma	Mr Benn Lockyer
	Implementing a Global primordial Prevention Universal Wellbeing Charter	Ms Susan Stevenson
	Evaluation of an online mental health and suicide gatekeeper resource for parents	Professor Alison Calear
	batyr's program evolution exemplifies youth collaboration in creating national mental health programs.	Ms Genesis Lindstrom Mr Jake Farris
	Building momentum for an Eating Disorder Safe society	Ms Hilary Smith
3D - Building Capacity, Bridging Gaps (Long Orals) Avalon Room	How Separation Trauma and Professional Training Gaps Fuel Family Conflict	Mrs Tracey Mcmillan
	Staff and student views on school physical activity and wellbeing program	Dr Rebecca Hodder
	Strengthening primary care professionals' capability to support family, friends and carers	Dr Philippa Ditton-Phare
	Youth Mental Health Quit Support	Ms Chloe Willats
	Partnering with purpose: People and culture, and peer workers	Ms Emily Smith Ms Olivia Goodchild
	Back-on-Track: An innovative intervention trialling behavioural activation in farmers experiencing low mood/depression	Associate Professor Alison Kennedy
	From Uncertainty to Strength: Sector-Specific Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training Program	Mrs Jo Drayton
3E – Workshop 3 Jarrah Room	Title: Together for Wellbeing: Co-Designing Mental Health Promotion Across Diverse Communities	
Space limited! Registration free but mandatory - Only available to face-to-face conference delegates	Hosted by: PHAA Mental Health Special Interest Group (SIG) and Mental Health Council of Tasmania Facilitated by: Dr. M Tasdik Hasan, Policy and Advocacy Lead, Mental Health Council of Tasmania; Committee Member, MH SIG, PHAA Presenters include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dr. M Tasdik Hasan, Policy and Advocacy Lead - Mental Health Council of TasmaniaMs Amanda Aitkin, Senior Project Officer - Mental Health Council of TasmaniaDr. Nazmul Huda, Co-Convenor - PHAA Mental Health SIGMs Deena Mehjabeen, Co-Convenor - PHAA Mental Health SIG	

3:00pm – 3:30pm	Afternoon Tea & Exhibition	Atrium
-----------------	----------------------------	--------

Time	Room	Session
3:30pm – 5:00pm	Lennox Ballroom	Closing Plenary – Working and learning together to promote a shared vision

Please note that the printable version of our conference program may not reflect the latest updates. For the most current information, you can refer to our website.

& Plenary Hub

Session Chair: Prof. Rosemary Calder

Panel Moderator: To be announced

Panellists:

1. **Mr David McGrath**, CEO, National Mental Health Commission
2. **Dr. Peggy Brown AO**, Chair, Mental Health Australia
3. **Ms Monica Kelly**, State Wellbeing Promotion Adviser and Executive Director, Victorian Department Of Health
4. **Ms Julia Knapton**, Deputy Commissioner System Development Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs, Western Australia Mental Health Commission

Presentation on the Joint Consensus Statement - Ms Suzanne Dick, Chief Executive Officer, Prevention United

Conference Close - Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Association of Australia
