



Supplementary Submission

Commonwealth funding and administration of mental health services

August 2011

beyondblue: the national depression initiative
PO Box 6100
HAWTHORN WEST VIC 3122

Tel: (03) 9810 6100
Fax: (03) 9810 6111
www.beyondblue.org.au

Funding and administration of mental health services in Australia

This supplementary submission to the Senate inquiry on *Commonwealth funding and administration of mental health services* responds to a comment regarding *beyondblue: the national depression initiative* made in a submission provided to the inquiry. The submission suggested that *beyondblue* required registrants for a professional development course to be an 'endorsed psychologist'. The following information includes a list of *beyondblue* professional development training courses and other activities where *beyondblue* works with both registered and clinical psychologists.

beyondblue has recently offered two professional development training courses:

- **Young Minds** – this training program was developed by *beyondblue* and the Australian General Practice Network. It has been delivered face-to-face through Divisions of General Practice and online. The program was formally accredited with peak professional bodies including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration, Mental Health Nurses and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. All psychologists were able to participate in this training.
- **Beyond babyblues: detecting and managing perinatal mental health disorders in primary care** – this online training program was developed by *beyondblue* through the National Perinatal Depression Initiative. This program has been accredited for professional development points by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Royal College of Nursing Australia and is also accredited as a Mental Health Skills Training activity by the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration. All health professionals, including psychologists, are able to complete this training.

In addition to these professional development courses, *beyondblue* works with psychologists across a number of programs and services. These include:

- The ***beyondblue* information and referral line**. The info line provides clinical information and referral services through a dedicated telephone line and email, staffed by mental health trained operators. All info line operators must:
 - Hold one of the following qualifications:
 - A tertiary degree (of minimum three years duration) in a relevant discipline (social science, social work, welfare studies, psychology or counselling); or
 - A tertiary degree (of minimum three year duration) and a post-graduate degree or diploma in a relevant discipline (Social Science, Social Work, Welfare Studies, Psychology or Counselling);
 - Have a minimum of three months' counselling experience (equivalent to 456 hours), demonstrating the ability to work in a strengths-based or solution-focused framework (preferably telephone counselling); and

- Have knowledge of depression, anxiety and associated issues, particularly primary care pathways. This entails either having completed a mental health/abnormal psychology unit/subject as part of university course work, having relevant field experience in mental health or telephone experience in a related field.
- The ***beyondblue* National Workplace Program**. This awareness, prevention and early intervention program has been developed for workplace settings, and is delivered through a network of *beyondblue*-accredited facilitators. The experience and qualifications of *beyondblue* facilitators include:
 - Tertiary qualifications (minimum Bachelor degree level) in mental health (for example, psychology, occupational therapy or social work).
 - Significant experience (at least two years) working in an adult mental health/clinical setting with skills in assessment and treatment of mental illness.
 - Significant experience in providing educational workshops in a variety of different settings.
 - Experience in occupational rehabilitation, business, human resources and/or management.
- **Community Support Training** in disaster-affected communities. This training aims to build the community's capacity to respond to a range of psychological reactions that people may experience after a disaster. The program targets adult community and business leaders in disaster-affected communities, and is delivered through a network of *beyondblue* facilitators. The facilitators require the same experience and qualifications as those delivering the *beyondblue* National Workplace Program (outlined above).
- The ***beyondblue* Directory of Medical and Allied Health Practitioners in Mental Health**. This directory is designed to help people with depression, anxiety and related disorders find a medical or health professional in their local area to diagnose, treat and manage their condition.

The health professionals eligible to register on the directory include:

- **General Practitioners** with postgraduate accredited mental health training, i.e.
 - any professional mental health training activity accredited by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)
 - any GP Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC) accredited training program
 - Level One Skills Training/Level Two Skills Training GPMHSC professional development activities

- Mental Health Skills Training (MHST) accredited by GPMHSC
Focused Psychological Strategies Skills Training (FPS ST) accredited by GPMHSC.
- **Clinical Psychologists** assessed as being eligible for membership of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Clinical Psychologists and who are registered with the Psychologists Registration Board in the state or territory in which they practice
- **Psychologists** fully registered with the Psychologists Registration Board in the state or territory in which they practice
- **Occupational Therapists** in Mental Health who are full or part-time members of Occupational Therapists Australia (OT AUSTRALIA), with a minimum of two years' experience in mental health, who abide by the Australian Competency Standards for Occupational Therapists in Mental Health
- **Social Workers** in Mental Health who are members of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), and have been accredited as Mental Health Social Workers.
- **Mental Health Nurses** who have been credentialed through the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses.

All practitioners providing mental health interventions under the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative are required to provide their Medicare Provider Number to confirm their eligibility to do so.

As this overview of *beyondblue* professional development training courses and other programs and activities has demonstrated, both registered and clinical psychologists are eligible to participate in, and contribute towards, *beyondblue*'s work.