

Australia invests \$133.5M in child, youth and perinatal mental healthcare

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The Australian government has announced an investment of \$133.5 million to support child, youth and perinatal mental health programs. Approximately 560,000 Australian children and adolescents are estimated to have a mental illness and one in four young Australians aged 16 to 24 experiences mental illness in any given year. In addition, each year almost 100,000 Australian parents are affected by perinatal depression and anxiety.

Intervention early in life and at an early stage of illness can reduce the duration and impact of mental illness.

The Be You initiative will be extended for two years from 2021–22, through an additional government investment of \$46.0 million.

Be You is a school-based mental health program that aims to give teachers the skills and resources to be able to teach students how to manage their mental health and wellbeing, build resilience, and support the mental wellbeing of other students.

The initiative is delivered by Beyond Blue in partnership with headspace and Early Childhood Australia. The program is available to all schools and early learning services (ELs) in Australia, and is currently operating in 70 per cent of schools and 25 per cent of ELs.

The government is also providing an additional \$16 million over two years to Emerging Minds to continue the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health.

The centre supports health, social and community professionals to identify, assess and support infants and children who are at risk of, or currently experiencing, mental health difficulties.

The funding announced will bring the total Government investment in the National Child and Youth Mental Health Program encompassing Be You and Emerging Minds to \$206.2 million over seven years.