



# Answering the call – measuring the mental health and wellbeing of police and emergency services personnel

## Frequently asked questions for participants

### 1. How does this survey support *beyondblue's* work with police and emergency services?

*beyondblue* is undertaking a national research study to build a comprehensive picture of the mental health and wellbeing of police and emergency services personnel in Australia.

*beyondblue* plans to work with ambulance, fire and rescue, police and SES agencies across Australia for the study.

The study is currently the main focus of the *beyondblue* Police and Emergency Services (PES) Program. It has three key phases:

- Phase 1 was a qualitative project which gathered the personal experiences of current and former police and emergency services personnel and family members.
- Phase 2 involves the first nationally representative survey of police and emergency services personnel in Australia – *Answering the call*. *beyondblue* has engaged The University of Western Australia and Roy Morgan Research to undertake this phase.

- Phase 3 will be a collaborative 'evidence to action' project. The findings from Phases 1 and 2 will be used to identify and implement practical strategies to improve the mental health of police and emergency services personnel across Australia.

### 2. What is the aim of the national survey?

The survey aims to establish important national baseline measures for wellbeing, mental health conditions and suicide risk among police and emergency services personnel, and provide clear evidence about the issues affecting the mental health of police and emergency services personnel and the best ways to provide support.

### 3. What is the national survey about?

The national survey will investigate the prevalence of common mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide risk. It will also collect important information about stigma, use of supports, services and programs, and factors that support or jeopardise the mental health of police and emergency services personnel.

This information will be used to identify and implement practical improvements in mental health for people working in this sector.

### 4. What input has the police and emergency services sector had into the survey?

The overall study methodology was developed with input from an Advisory Group comprising senior leaders from police and emergency services agencies, an executive-level union representative, clinicians and other expert practitioners, researchers with specialist expertise, and community and family representatives.

The survey was developed by the research team at The University of Western Australia, led by Associate Professor David Lawrence, with guidance from the Technical Advisory Group. The Technical Advisory Group includes agency representatives, researchers with expertise in epidemiology, post-traumatic stress and workplace mental health, former police and emergency services employees, and members of the study Advisory Group.

## 5. Who can take part in the survey?

A representative random sample of more than 20,000 employees, volunteers and former employees in police, ambulance, fire and rescue and state emergency services agencies across Australia is being invited to participate in the survey.

Participants have been selected at random and not on the basis of their wellbeing. This is to provide a representation of the needs of the whole police and emergency services sector.



## 6. How long does it take to complete the survey?

The online survey should take about 20–25 minutes to complete.

## 7. Can I request a paper copy of the survey to complete?

Yes. Completing the survey online is faster but we understand that some people would prefer to do it in hardcopy and mail it back instead.

To request a paper copy of the survey, email [answeringthecall@roymorgan.com](mailto:answeringthecall@roymorgan.com) or call the research team on 1800 677 248.

## 8. Will my answers remain confidential?

Yes, your survey results will remain completely confidential. No identifying information about you from the survey will be released to anyone.

The survey software is provided by Roy Morgan Research and is completely independent of all police and emergency services agencies' IT environments.

The information you provide will be held securely and managed by Roy Morgan Research and The University of Western Australia.

Your confidentiality is ensured by the ethics approval granted by the UWA Human Research Ethics Committee.

All results from the survey will be released in combined form only.

Once the survey is closed, all email and postal addresses used to distribute the survey will be destroyed.

## 9. What is the unique ID number?

Each person being invited to participate in the survey is given a unique survey ID number for processing purposes only.

## 10. Is the survey compulsory?

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the survey at any time during completion.

If you don't feel comfortable providing an answer to any question, you don't have to. However, to be able to produce a comprehensive picture of the mental health and wellbeing of police and emergency services personnel, we encourage you to participate fully in the survey.

## 11. What if I don't want to answer some of the questions?

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, we hope that you will answer all questions. If you can't answer, or don't feel comfortable answering, any question you don't have to.

You may withdraw from the survey at any time.



## 12. What if I don't have time to finish the survey in one go?

You can save your answers, exit the survey and then re-enter at a later time to complete it.

## 13. Can I complete the survey on any computer, either at work or home?

Yes, you can access the survey from any computer, tablet or mobile phone.

As the survey involves a series of questions it is generally easier to complete it on a desktop computer or tablet.

## 14. I don't work in an operational role – do I need to do the survey?

Yes, we are trying to capture a representative picture of all the people who work in police and emergency services agencies.



## 15. What if I find some of the questions distressing?

The survey includes questions about issues that you may have experienced and services you may have used, which you may find distressing. If participating in the survey raises any concerns about how you have been feeling, and you would like to talk to someone, there are a number of support options available to assist you:

You can visit your GP, another health professional, or contact your agency's Employee Assistance Program.

The *beyondblue* Support Service also provides free, immediate, short-term counselling advice and referrals to people in Australia via telephone and email 24/7, and web chat from 3pm to midnight (AEST), every day. The Support Service can be contacted on 1300 22 4636 or via email or web chat at [beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support)

For crisis support and suicide prevention services, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, available 24/7, or online text chat from 7pm to 4am (AEST) at [lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat](https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat)

If you feel that you are at immediate risk of harm or your life may be in danger, please call triple zero – 000.

## 16. Who has provided approval for the survey?

Approval to conduct the national survey has been provided by The University of Western Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee, with reference number RA/4/1/9036, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures.

Any person considering participating in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time.

In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Ethics office at UWA on 08 6488 4703 or by emailing [humanethics@uwa.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@uwa.edu.au)

Many police and emergency services agencies have internal research approval processes and the research team has worked closely with each organisation to meet their requirements.



## 17. How will the information be used?

*beyondblue's* goal in undertaking the overall study is to generate new information that will lead to improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of people working in the police and emergency services sector. *beyondblue* is committed to using the study findings to drive change.

The findings of the national survey will be used in Phase 3 of the study, to identify practical actions to improve mental health and wellbeing for individuals, organisations and systems within the police and emergency services sector. *beyondblue* is committed to working collaboratively with police and emergency services personnel, agencies and other key stakeholders in the development of these practical actions.

The findings will also inform the work of the broader *beyondblue* Police and Emergency Services Program.

## 18. Where can I find out the results from the survey?

The findings of the survey will be available in late 2018 at [beyondblue.org.au/pesresearch](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/pesresearch)

## 19. Where can I get further information about the survey?

If you would like further information about the survey, please phone the research team on 1800 677 248 or email [answeringthecall@roymorgan.com](mailto:answeringthecall@roymorgan.com)

For more information about *beyondblue's* Police and Emergency Services Program, visit [beyondblue.org.au/pes](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/pes)

You can also learn more about promoting mental health and wellbeing in police and emergency services workplaces at [www.headsup.org.au/pes](https://www.headsup.org.au/pes)

## What supports are available to police and emergency services personnel?

### *beyondblue* Support Service

1300 22 4636

[www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support)

Access free, confidential support from a trained mental health professional.

### *beyondblue* online forums

[www.beyondblue.org.au/forums](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/forums)

Access anonymous peer support around the clock from *beyondblue*'s online forums.

### Lifeline

13 11 14

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

Lifeline provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

### mindhealthconnect

[www.mindhealthconnect.org.au](http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au)

Access to trusted, relevant mental health care services, online programs and resources.



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