

Australia has a new Political Party

Australia has a new political party with a focus on the wellbeing of all Australians. The Australian Mental Health Party (AMHP) held its inaugural National Conference on Monday 1 May 2017. The AMHP will have candidates at the 2019 Federal Election and State Elections thereafter.

The Australian Mental Health Party brings together members of the general community with professionals in mental health, to drive real improvements in mental health and overall quality of life for all Australians. The Party Leader, Dr Ben Mullings, is a Counselling Psychologist with a wealth of personal and professional experience relating to mental health and evidence-based care.

The Australian Mental Health Party was born out of growing public concern that mainstream political parties see mental health as a secondary priority. The party goal is to help Australians lead happier and more fulfilling lives, reaching towards full potential and prosperity in education, work, and in personal aspirations. In aiming for improvement of the overall mental health of our nation, the party will also work towards greater support, treatment, and care for those who live with mental health conditions or experience significant psychological distress.

“For too long, human beings have been an afterthought in politics...we intend to change that.”

Dr Ben Mullings, Leader of the Australian Mental Health Party

What does the Australian Mental Health Party stand for?

The Australian Mental Health Party has a focus on the wellbeing of people in Australia. They aim not only to improve mental health care in Australia, but also to prevent the dire outcomes of mental ill health. It's about the quality of life of all Australians. The core values of empowerment, equality, support, and healthy relationships will guide the Party in its decisions and policies.

What are the key policies of the Australian Mental Health Party?

All policies of the Australian Mental Health Party place emphasis on the Australian people and their quality of life. For too long, human beings have been an afterthought of the dominant political parties. The Australian Mental Health Party intends to change that. Emerging policies include:

- Reforms to the Medicare Better Access program, so that all Australians have adequate Medicare funded help to care for their mental health.
- Nationally consistent standards in primary and secondary schools for children to learn how to manage emotions and form strong and healthy relationships.
- Reduction in the unacceptable rate of suicide in Australia.
- Funding to match the scale of mental ill health in Australia.

How can I support the Australian Mental Health Party?

The Australian Mental Health Party is a fledgling Party, and its very existence relies on the support of the Australian people. There are three ways to help:

- You can help meet the requirements of the Australian Electoral Commission by registering your support of the existence of the Party: go to <https://www.amhp.org.au/members/join-the-party/>
- You can contribute as a financial member of the Party.
- You can volunteer your time or skills to the Party.

For information or to join the party visit <https://www.amhp.org.au>

THE FACTS

Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease (World Health Organization, 2017).

45% of Australians will experience a mental health disorder in their lifetime (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

20% of Australians live with a mental health disorder in any one year period (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

A prominent 35-year longitudinal mental health study found that just 17% of people studied did not meet the diagnostic criteria for any mental health disorder over this time period. (Schaefer, J., Caspi, A., Belsky, D. et al. (2017). Enduring mental health: Prevalence and prediction. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 126, 212-224).

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