

APS 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES

# Prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of all Australians



# About the Australian Psychological Society

**The Australian Psychological Society (APS) is the peak body for psychology in Australia, dedicated to enhancing the lives of all Australians through evidence-based psychological science and practice.**

For more than 60 years, the APS has advocated for key community issues, supported the psychology profession, and worked to improve mental health outcomes nationwide.

In 2025, with a membership of over 25,000, we remain committed to advancing the profession and addressing evolving community needs.

# The 2025 Federal Election

**The 2025 Federal Election presents a crucial opportunity to strengthen Australia's mental health system by recognising and investing in the vital contributions of psychologists across all of society.**

Demand for support from psychologists continues to grow — driven by cost-of-living pressures, climate-related disasters, and the long-term impacts of COVID-19. We know that over 45,000 psychologists in Australia play an essential role in delivering high-quality care in mental health, disability, aged care, education, workplaces, and beyond.

Targeted investment in psychology services, expanded Medicare-subsidised access, and greater support for community-based mental health initiatives will ensure Australians receive the care they need when and where they need it.

Psychologists' expertise supports individuals, families, and communities in managing mental health challenges, enhancing resilience, improving quality of life, and supporting full economic participation. Psychologists are also key to building a thriving society, supporting people across the lifespan—from early childhood and school-based interventions to workforce wellbeing and aged care.

Continuing to address psychology workforce shortages through strategic investment in training, supervision, and regional incentives will ensure all Australians, regardless of location, can access expert psychological care. Reforms to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), domestic and family violence response, First Nations social and emotional wellbeing, and school-based programs must embed psychologists at every life-stage to improve outcomes and drive long-term positive change.

This election is an opportunity to harness the expertise of psychologists to create a healthier, more inclusive, and more productive Australia.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

We also acknowledge people with lived and living experience of the topics discussed in this report and those who support them.

# Australian's views on available mental health support: findings from our 2025 *Thinking Futures* report

Now in its second year, the *Thinking Futures* report offers an annual snapshot of psychology's influence in Australia, each year exploring a key theme.

The 2025 report examines the psychological health of Australian women and girls, with an emphasis on the impacts of domestic and family violence (DFV).

This year's report drew on public and academic sources, as well as insights from more than 2700 APS members.

It also included RedBridge Group research, commissioned by the APS, which provides a detailed analysis of the views of the Australian community. Across the political spectrum, Australians were united in their call for greater government investment in mental health and the profession of psychology.



**Thinking Futures: Psychology's role in transforming women and girls' psychological health**

## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR KEY FINDINGS

**89%**



of Australians see the provision of psychological services for women and girls as important.

**82%**



of psychology students and provisional psychologists report receiving limited education on women and girls' health during their university studies.

**54%**



of Australians think you shouldn't need to go to a GP to get a referral to see a psychologist under Medicare.

**71%**



of Australians think the number of Medicare-funded psychology sessions should be decided with their psychologist, not by the government.

## Domestic and family violence perceptions

**83%**



of Australians believe that those who are impacted by domestic and family violence should have access to more psychologist services.

**78%**



of all Australians believe it's extremely or very important for the government to address family, domestic and sexual violence against girls and women.

## Australian's views on available mental health support

**OVER 6 in 10**



Australians place a high value on psychological services, stating that it is very important for the government to invest in mental health support.

**ONLY 10%**



of Australians feel the government is doing enough to ensure access to psychology services to those who need them most.

**85%**



of psychology professionals are very or extremely concerned about the rates of domestic and family violence against girls and women.

**COST 66%**

The top barriers preventing Australians from seeking mental health support.

**ACCESS ISSUES 44%**

Sources: Australian Psychological Society (APS). (2024, December). APS member survey; and RedBridge Group. (2024, October-November). Community survey.

# Strategic Priorities

The 2025 Federal Election presents an opportunity to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the Australian community through investing in psychology and psychologists.

The APS calls on all parties and candidates to demonstrate strong policy leadership by committing to the following strategic actions:

## 1. Mental health

- **Increase access to psychology services:** Increase Medicare-funded psychology sessions to ensure Australians receive adequate care, and work with the APS to address the current limitations and barriers that hinder effective treatment and outcomes.
- **Enhance funding for mental health services:** Allocate the needed funding to psychology services to meet the growing demand and reduce wait times, ensuring timely, appropriate and preventative care for all Australians.
- **Strengthen public mental health services:** Ensure sustainable and equitable access to public mental health care across Australia through Commonwealth-State/Territory collaboration and coordinated funding mechanisms which integrate psychological expertise to address service gaps.

In our 2025 [Thinking Futures report](#), we gathered Australians' opinions about psychology services:

- **Only 10% of Australians** feel the government is doing enough to ensure access to psychology services to those who need them most.
- **54% of Australians** think you shouldn't need to go to a GP to get a referral to see a psychologist under Medicare.
- **71% of Australians** think the number of Medicare-funded psychology sessions should be decided with their psychologist, not by the government.

[Read our 2025-26 Pre-Budget Submission here.](#)

## 2. NDIS and disability

- **Protect and support access to psychology within NDIS:** Ensure that NDIS participants have timely access to psychological assessments and supports, addressing current service gaps, reversing cuts to psychology services and recognising psychologists' unique expertise in understanding the psychological impact of disability.
- **Streamline regulatory and administrative processes:** Reduce bureaucratic and regulatory hurdles for psychologists providing services under the NDIS, allowing for more efficient and effective care delivery which values the professional contribution of psychologists.
- **Provide clarity on foundational and psychosocial supports:** Include psychologists and the APS in the development and implementation of foundational and psychosocial supports, both within and outside of the NDIS.

### Read our recent NDIS submissions:

[APS Submission to the NDIS Review](#)

[APS Response to the Consultation on the Draft Lists of NDIS Supports](#)

[APS Submission to the Inquiry on the NDIS Amendment \(Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1\) Bill 2024](#)

[APS Submission to the NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce](#)

[APS Submission to the NDIS Annual Pricing Review 2023-24](#)

## 3. Young Australians

- **Implement affordable and accessible mental health care for all young Australians:** Establish pathways to fully Medicare-subsidised mental health care for young people under 25, investing in accessible care during critical developmental stages and creating a brighter outlook for the future of this nation.
- **Expand school-based mental health programs:** Implement evidence-based psychological interventions in schools to support the mental health of children and adolescents.

**Psychological distress has risen among 15 to 24-year olds from 18.4% in 2011 to 42.3% in 2021**

See our [Thinking Futures 2024 report](#)

## 4. Workforce development

- **Invest in psychology education and training:** Increase funding for tertiary professional psychology programs, with parity across all areas of psychological practice, to address workforce shortages, particularly in regional and underserved areas.
- **Extend the Commonwealth Prac Payment:** Commit to extending the Commonwealth Prac Payment to other professions, including psychology, to reduce the significant financial and personal burden of placements.
- **Support for supervision and professional development:** Continue to invest in resources for the training and supervision of psychologists to ensure a robust and diverse psychology profession working to its full scope of practice.



- **Enable a digitally capable and future-ready profession:** Support psychologists to make use of safe, responsible and best-practice digital technologies (including AI) to support their practices and their patients.

In our [2025-26 Pre-Budget submission](#), one of our three broad objectives includes strengthening the psychology workforce to optimise the contribution of psychology and psychologists to mental health and social reform. Previous policy reforms and Budget measures to grow the psychology workforce need to be continued, built upon, and new initiatives implemented (e.g., Commonwealth Prac Payment for postgraduate psychology students on placement).

## 5. Domestic and family violence (DFV)

- **Provide timely psychological support for victim-survivors:** Fund psychology services for Australians affected by domestic and family violence, recognising the profound mental health impacts and social costs.
- **Support the workforce to respond to DFV:** Support the APS in developing a DFV Professional Support Network which provides specialised training for psychologists to support peers, health professionals, and DFV workers.

**89% of Australians** see the provision of psychological services for women and girls as important.

**83% of Australians** believe that those who are impacted by domestic and family violence should have access to more psychological services

**82% of psychology students and provisional psychologists** report receiving limited education on women and girls' health during their university studies.

See our [Thinking Futures 2025 Report](#)

## 6. Aged care

- **Embed psychological services in aged care settings:** Integrate psychologists into aged care facilities to address the mental health needs of older Australians, improving quality of life and wellbeing.
- **Increase psychological training for aged care staff:** Support psychologists to provide training for aged care workers on the psychological aspects of aging, including managing dementia-related behaviours and supporting mental health.

**Read our Position statement:**

[Psychologists in residential aged care](#)

## 7. First Nations social and emotional wellbeing

- **Culturally appropriate psychology services:** Fund and support the development of mental health services that are culturally appropriate and led by First Nations communities to address the social and emotional wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Increase First Nations representation in psychology:** Implement scholarships and professional development initiatives to encourage First Nations Australians to pursue careers in psychology, enhancing service delivery within communities.

Learn more here:

[Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples experiencing intergenerational trauma](#)

## 8. Veterans and defence personnel

- **Implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide:** Commit to the full implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations, drawing on the expertise of psychologists and in collaboration with the APS.
- **Increase fees for DVA psychology services:** Ensure that DVA fees are appropriate and sustainable, allowing psychologists to provide the level of care that veterans and their families require.
- **Support the mental health of ADF personnel and veterans:** Undertake further structural and policy reform and investment to improve the mental health and wellbeing of ADF personnel and veterans, including through preventative interventions and trauma-informed services.

Learn more here:

[The Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2029](#)

[APS response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide](#)

## 9. Psychological science and research

- **Secure funding for psychological research:** Ensure that there are stable and equitable pathways for funding innovative research in psychological science and practice which enhance the wellbeing of Australians, and which positions Australia at the forefront of evidence-based practice for the characteristics and needs of the Australian population.
- **Embed psychological science across public policy:** Make full use of the extensive capability and expertise of psychological scientists and psychologists – as a profession of scientist-practitioners – throughout the public policy process, including in policy and program design, trials, experiments and evaluations.

Further reading:

[Thinking Futures 2025 report](#)

[2025-26 Pre-Budget Submission](#)

[APS Submissions](#)



# Psychology: improving the mental health and wellbeing of Australians

## Psychologists are experts in human behaviour and mental health

They use evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and interventions to support people to improve their mental health, emotional wellbeing, relationships, and quality of life.

Psychologists work with individuals, families, groups, and communities to prevent, assess, and treat mental health conditions and to promote wellbeing across all ages, settings and stages of life.

## Who benefits from psychology?

Psychology services benefit people across the lifespan and from varied social, cultural and economic backgrounds. This includes children, youth, adults and older Australians.

Psychologists work with people experiencing a wide range of challenges, including anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, stress, substance use, relationship difficulties, disability, developmental conditions, and severe and complex mental illness.

Psychologists also play a vital role in supporting people dealing with the psychological impacts of life circumstances such as unemployment, housing insecurity, chronic health conditions, discrimination, and family and domestic violence. They also help organisations and workplaces improve employee wellbeing, enhance performance and create psychologically safe and productive work environments.

## Where do psychologists work?

Psychologists work across every part of Australia's health, education, disability, justice, defence, and community services systems.

They provide services in hospitals, private practices, schools, universities, residential aged care, community health, rehabilitation services, correctional facilities, disaster response and recovery teams, and frontline services supporting people experiencing family and domestic violence. Psychologists also work in businesses, government agencies, not-for-profit settings and community organisations, helping to build healthier workplaces, enhance leadership, manage change and improve employee wellbeing and performance.

Psychologists also contribute to research, public policy, and system design to ensure services are safe, effective and meet the needs of the Australian community.

Front cover image: *The Flannel Flower, an Australian native, is the national symbol to promote mental health awareness in Australia.*



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