

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024**

# PUSHING FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

**The Push for Better Foundation engages and educates people in mental and physical health, raises awareness of the mental health issues affecting everyday Australians, and helps foster mental wellbeing and fitness.**

The Push for Better Foundation works to deliver programs - like The Push-Up Challenge, educational content and platforms that improve understanding of mental fitness and inspire action.

Held every year, The Push-Up Challenge helps put a spotlight on the number of lives lost to suicide and is a way to encourage physical health, connection and conversation, and education and awareness about mental health.

In 2024, The Push-Up Challenge participants completed 3,249 push-ups from 5-28 June, representing the number of lives lost to suicide in 2022.

## OUR VISION

**To level up the mental fitness of individuals & communities.**



# WHAT WE DO



## Educate

We increase mental health literacy by raising awareness and understanding of mental health and building mental fitness.



## Connect

We bring people and communities together, spark conversations about mental health, and use platforms to connect individuals with their goals.



## Health & Wellbeing

We directly impact individual mental wellbeing by promoting lifelong healthy habits, daily exercise and raising funds for mental health. By delivering on our key foundations of education, connection, health and wellbeing, we will push for – and achieve – a more physically and mentally healthy future for all Australians.





# A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON AND CEO **NICK HUDSON**



**In a time where looking after our mental health has never been more important, it's been incredible to see so many Australians step up - and push-up - for better.**

Across the country, Australians continue to face challenges that put pressure on our mental wellbeing. Whether it's the rising cost of living, environmental stress, or just the pace of modern life, the need to prioritise mental health has never been clearer.

At The Push-Up Challenge, we're proud to be part of a movement that reminds Australians to check in with themselves and each other - and to keep conversations around mental health open, honest and stigma-free.

In 2024, over 218,000 people joined us to push for better mental health - a phenomenal community of individuals, teams, schools and organisations coming together with a shared purpose. Thanks to your efforts, we raised an incredible \$12.3 million for mental health charities across the country, including Lifeline Australia, headspace, and our own Push for Better Foundation.

In 2024, we saw more people than ever join the push for better mental health. It was humbling to witness the energy, creativity and commitment from workplaces, schools, gyms, sporting teams, and households across the country. From early morning to late-night push-ups, you showed up for your mental fitness - and for the people around you.

The funds raised this year go directly towards organisations doing life-changing work in mental health support, education and suicide prevention. With the help of our amazing community behind us, we're seeing real change.

This year, I've been especially inspired by the next generation stepping up through our Student Ambassador Program. Young people face unique pressures, and we believe it's critical to equip them with tools, knowledge and support to look after themselves and each other. What started as a small idea just a few years ago has grown into a powerful force for change in schools and communities around the country with more than 642 Student Ambassadors joining us this year.

While we're proud of how far we've come, we know there's still plenty of work to do. Our team is already hard at work behind the scenes, making sure next year's challenge is even more impactful, inclusive and engaging.

To everyone who's pushed with us this year - thank you. You're helping build a future where mental fitness is just as important as physical fitness. And to the team at The Push-Up Challenge: your passion, determination and heart are what make all of this possible.

Until next time, let's keep showing up for ourselves, for each other, and for better mental health for all Australians.

**Nick Hudson,**  
Chairperson & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Hudson'.



# OUR BOARD



## NICK HUDSON

### Chairperson & Chief Executive Officer

With a background in engineering plus a Master of Business Administration, Nick brings his talent for delivering strategy and bringing start-ups to life as the founder of The Push-Up Challenge. Nick leads a small but mighty team and is a constant inspiration to others with his unwavering passion for raising awareness about mental health and suicide prevention. He was recently awarded Australian of the Year WA Local Hero for 2024 and Mental Health Advocate of the Year WA, and with his own lived experience of mental health challenges, Nick is the embodiment of how connecting with others, valuing physical and mental wellbeing and a bit of competitive banter for good measure, can lead to better mental health outcomes for all Australians.



## PERAN BISHOP

### Non-Executive Director

Peran has been on board with The Push-Up Challenge since day dot and has strong experience in systems, sales, product development and marketing. Peran is all about giving back to his community and is well known for volunteering with many grassroots organisations. Recognised as Club Person of the Year at his surf lifesaving club, Peran believes in the power of connection and physical wellbeing in bringing people together.



## BRENTON LAWS

### Non-Executive Director

A leader in innovation and business development, Brenton has a proven track record in finance, economics, strategy and commercial development. With a Masters of Business Administration and as a member of the Australian Institute of Directors, Brenton knows that quality governance can help shape better communities and outcomes for everyone. Brenton is currently heading up the Innovation and Development team at Western Power and continues to contribute to other NFP organisations with his financial skills.



## HEATHER MCINTYRE

### Non-Executive Director

A lawyer with a history in private practice, oil and gas, not for profit and government sectors, Heather brings her knack for detail, problem solving and advocacy to our Board. As a long-term volunteer with a number of charities including Red Cross, Ronald McDonald House and The Humanitarian Group, Heather firmly believes in sharing her skills and contributing to the communities that need help the most. Spending time as President of the not-for-profit organisation, Leading Youth Forward, Heather knows first-hand the importance of mentoring at-risk teens and how a positive presence can lead to better mental health outcomes.

# THE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH ACROSS AUSTRALIA IN 2024

Our impact on mental health across Australia in 2024 is clear. Participants reported improvement in their health and wellbeing as a direct result of The Push-Up Challenge.



**317M**

Push-ups



**218K**

Participants



**12.3M**

Funds Raised

## PHYSICAL HEALTH



**99%**

felt fitter and stronger



**97%**

felt motivated to exercise



**96%**

felt motivated for future exercise

## WELLBEING AND CONNECTION



**89%**

felt connected



**94%**

mood was improved



**94%**

learnt about mental health

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



**86.5%**

had one or more conversations



**40%**

had two to five conversation



**10%**

had ten or more conversations

# OUR FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE

In 2024, The Push-Up Challenge brought over 218,000 people together to actively improve their mental health.

Funds raised by The Push-Up Challenge in 2024 are being used to:

- Raise awareness, engage and educate people in mental health through running The Push-Up Challenge;
- Ensure the Foundation can continue to operate and run The Push-Up Challenge in future years;
- Equip Student Ambassadors across Australia with the tools and resources needed to encourage their schools and local community to level up their mental and physical fitness while learning about mental health; and
- Fund new initiatives to address existing gaps in mental health promotion and service provision.





# IAIN'S STORY

**In 2021, Iain from Mackay, Queensland, lost his 14-year-old daughter Ashley to suicide. Since then, he's taken part in The Push-Up Challenge twice, raising nearly \$15,000 for mental health in honour of Ashley.**

"I still cry for her every day," Iain says. "The grief and sadness, I don't think will ever go away. It's not something that you're ever going to get over."

For Iain, staying active has been a form of therapy. Even mid-round at the golf course, he finds strength in the movement and purpose of the Challenge. "When people ask why I'm dropping for push-ups, I tell them - and every time, they get behind it."

Through the support of his community and the shared purpose of the challenge, Iain has turned his grief into action. He now encourages others to speak openly about mental health and to listen without judgement. "If someone says they're struggling, just take that at face value."

Though nothing will bring Ashley back, Iain continues to push for better mental health - for her, and for others. "If sharing her story or raising funds and getting help to people who need it is going to stop one other family having to go through this, then it's worth it."



# STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**In 2024, our Student Ambassador Program continued to grow as a powerful force for change in schools and communities across Australia. With youth mental health still under immense pressure - and suicide remaining the leading cause of death among young Australians - we know how important it is to equip the next generation with the tools to protect their mental wellbeing and support those around them.**

Thanks to funds raised through The Push-Up Challenge, we were able to support 642 Student Ambassadors nationwide this year. These inspiring Year 10, 11 and 12 students stepped up to lead mental health conversations in their schools - encouraging their peers to get moving, stay connected and learn more about mental health through The Push-Up Challenge.

Each Student Ambassador took part in dedicated training, designed to build mental health literacy, reduce stigma and give them the confidence to check in with others and have meaningful conversations. By becoming leaders in their schools, these young people are helping to create more open, supportive and mentally healthy environments for themselves and their communities. In fact, 99% of students said The Push-Up Challenge created a positive and inclusive school culture.

The program continues to prove just how much of a difference young people can make when they're empowered with the right knowledge and support. Together, they're shaping a future where mental fitness is part of everyday school life.

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**“Bringing something to my school community that is impactful and getting to see everyone participating and getting involved was so rewarding. To see the conversations open-up and everyone have something to look forward to was great. Seeing other students throughout the school day get down and do push-ups or join in truly showed me how important this program is and how it's improved our school environment.” - Student Ambassador**





# WORKPLACES

**In 2024, the conversation around workplace wellbeing continued to evolve - and it's clear that employers across Australia are recognising the vital role mental health plays in a thriving, productive workforce.**

We were proud to see over 59,000 workplace participants taking part in The Push-Up Challenge this year. There were more than 8,700 workplace teams spanning industries including healthcare, tech, government, finance, construction, mining, first responders and more. From high-vis sites to office towers, Aussie workplaces showed up with purpose - using push-ups as a catalyst for connection, movement and mental health awareness.

More than just a physical challenge, it gave teams a reason to pause, check in and prioritise their mental wellbeing together. Many participants reported positive changes in both their physical and mental health, with 82% saying The Push-Up Challenge outperformed other workplace wellness initiatives they'd experienced.

When workplaces create space for movement, conversation and shared goals, the impact goes far beyond the work day. And in 2024, that impact was felt right across the country



"It provided a unique and invaluable opportunity to spark meaningful conversations about mental health, highlight the positive effects of regular exercise, and foster plenty of light-hearted, team-building banter." - Tony, Tidy Up





# INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

**In February 2024, The Push-Up Challenge was launched in Canada - our first step into international territory. This expansion marked a significant milestone for the organisation and progression in our mission to raise awareness and support for mental health on a global scale.**

The Canadian Challenge saw 50,000 participants complete 2,000 push-ups in 23 days, reflecting the 20% of Canadians living with mental illness. Together, participants completed over 44 million push-ups and raised an incredible \$2.5 million Canadian dollars for the Canadian Mental Health Association and its local branches - funds that will help provide critical support for people living with mental illness and promote better mental health outcomes nationwide.

Just as in Australia, movement became a gateway to connection, learning and conversation. Participants shared stories, supported one another, and helped spark important discussions about mental health in homes, schools, workplaces and communities across Canada.

Expanding The Push-Up Challenge to a new country was a significant and exciting milestone. The overwhelmingly positive response reinforced a belief at the heart of what we do - that the need to push for better mental health is universal, and that movement, connection and shared purpose have the power to bring people together across the world.



# EVENT BENEFICIARIES



**Lifeline exists to ensure no person in Australia must face their toughest moments alone.**

Every 24 seconds, a person in Australia will reach out to Lifeline for help. For over 60 years, Lifeline has been connecting with Australians, offering free and confidential one-to-one crisis support for people who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.

Lifeline is available 24 hours a day to listen, without judgement, to any person in Australia who is feeling overwhelmed, experiencing crisis or longs to be heard. As well as operating the 13 11 14 telephone line within 43 centres around the nation, the organisation also delivers 24/7 crisis text, webchat and a Support Toolkit.

In 2024, The Push for Better Foundation was proud to support Lifeline Australia for a fourth consecutive year, helping meet the ongoing demand for crisis support and suicide prevention services. Thanks to the incredible fundraising efforts of our Push-Up Challenge participants over the last four years, Lifeline has been able to support more than 400,000 Australians in crisis. In 2024, Lifeline responded to over 1.4million requests for support, creating an average of 120 safety plans a day to keep a person experiencing suicidal ideation safe.



## DAVID'S STORY

### A lifeline in his darkest moment

In 2019, David from Melbourne was at his lowest point following the end of a long-term relationship. Feeling isolated and overwhelmed, he made a call to Lifeline that he says changed everything.

David says he'll never forget that call and the kindness, humility and patience he received from the 'calming voice' on the other end of the phone. "I didn't want to be here anymore," David recalls. "That voice on the other end - made me feel secure, safe and heard." After receiving crisis support and ongoing care, David began to rebuild his mental health through movement. Exercise became a turning point, helping him regain his footing and eventually leading to a new chapter in life - now as a partner and proud dad.

Today, The Push-Up Challenge helps David stay connected with others and maintain his mental wellbeing.



**"The Challenge has given me the opportunity to engage my work colleagues, family and friends whilst remaining active." - David**

# EVENT BENEFICIARIES



**2 in 5 young people in Australia experience a mental health issue each year, and sadly, suicide is still the leading cause of death in people aged between 12-25.**

headspace is Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds.

Each year, headspace helps thousands of young people access vital support through our headspace centres in communities across Australia, our online and phone counselling services, our vocational services, and our presence in schools.

headspace helps young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support. Partnering with headspace for a second time, The Push for Better Foundation is proud to be supporting early intervention mental health services that help thousands of young people access vital support.



## GRACE'S STORY

**Turning experience into advocacy**

At 14, Grace Sholl from Queensland reached out to headspace for support with depression and anxiety – a decision that changed everything.

"headspace saved my life," Grace shares. "No one in my family had ever had mental health support; it wasn't like it was talked about."

Now 22, Grace is using her lived experience to make a difference. With a Bachelor of Psychology and a Master of Suicidology, she's become a passionate advocate for mental health.



**"I'm passionate about using my lived experience to educate and empower others, and to advocate for improvements in the healthcare system – because nothing about us should be done without us." – Grace Sholl**



**PUSH  
FOR BETTER  
FOUNDATION**

[www.thepushupchallenge.com.au](http://www.thepushupchallenge.com.au)