



The Push-Up Challenge appoints Nicole Cikarela as new CEO; expands into third and fourth international markets

MEDIA RELEASE: PERTH, 30 JANUARY 2026: Perth-based mental health and fitness event, [The Push-Up Challenge](#), is set to expand into two new international markets, launching in New Zealand and the United Kingdom this February.

To guide the organisation through this milestone and accelerate its growth plans, the Perth-based mental health and fitness Foundation has appointed Nicole Cikarela as its new chief executive officer.

Cikarela joins the organisation following a six year tenure at HBF Health where she held various senior leadership roles. She has also held senior positions at Clemenger BBDO and RAC WA, and currently serves on the board of Melanoma Patients Australia.

The Push for Better Foundation's board chair Trevor Harris commented: *"Nicole is an exceptional fit to guide The Push-Up Challenge through its next phase of growth. A strong background in leading health, community and commercial organisations through growth, transformation and scale over more than 20 years position her perfectly for where the Challenge and the Foundation are heading next."*

Following its successful launch into Canada in 2024, the expansion into the United Kingdom and New Zealand cements the organisation's commitment to uniting communities in mental health, at a time when demand for mental health support has never been greater.

Emulating its Canadian model, which has seen over 120,000 Canadians raise over AUD \$7.1 million for the Canadian Mental Health Foundation in just two years, The Push-Up Challenge will be rolled out in partnership with mental health charity The Samaritans in the United Kingdom, and the Mental Health Foundation in New Zealand.

"I'm incredibly excited to step into the CEO role at the Push for Better Foundation at a time of significant momentum. The Push-Up Challenge exists because of the extraordinary vision and commitment of Nick Hudson, who has created a movement that truly improves lives and communities. I'm looking forward to building on that legacy both locally and internationally, deepening partnerships and helping more people move, connect and take proactive steps for their mental health," said Cikarela.

Founder of The Push-Up Challenge Nick Hudson will step aside from the day-to-day leadership role but will remain with the organisation as an advisor, while continuing to serve on the board.

"We're proud to have built an accessible event that truly has no borders," said The Push-Up Challenge founder Nick Hudson. *"It's our mission to allow as many people as possible to benefit from a physical and mental challenge like ours, and based on the way Australians and Canadians have embraced the Challenge, we can't wait to see how it's received by our friends across the ditch, and all the way on the other side of the world."*

Now in its tenth year in Australia, The Push-Up Challenge has seen more than 1M participants complete over 1 billion push-ups, raising over AUD \$70 million for mental health.

The Push-Up Challenge's success to-date has been validated by a 2024 [study](#) released this year by The University of Melbourne, which found that The Push-Up Challenge has significant behavioural change on its participants, with them experiencing significant improvements in mental wellbeing, resilience and social connection following the Challenge.

It also found that The Push-Up Challenge helps participants who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, with significant reductions in the severity of depression and anxiety symptoms immediately following the event and three months afterwards, highlighting the lasting benefits of movement and community for mental health.

Following the Challenge, participants who reported experiencing a mental health problem were over twice as likely to seek help (including help from a health professional, family member, friend, digital support group or by taking

medication), and over three times as likely to adopt self-care strategies such as doing more exercise, spending time in nature, connecting with a friend or family member or spending time with a pet.

The Push-Up Challenge will run in Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand in February 2026, and in Australia in June. For more information, visit thepushupchallenge.com.au.

-ENDS-

About The Push-Up Challenge

Founded by Nick Hudson in Perth, Australia in 2017, The Push-Up Challenge began as a challenge between four friends, and has grown to become one of the world's most successful international mental health and fitness events. 2026 will mark The Push-Up Challenge's third year in Canada and tenth year in Australia, as well as the Challenge's inaugural expansion into the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The Challenge is a fun way for participants to connect with one another, get fit, and learn about mental health, with participants encouraged to raise money for mental health charities. The event is free to take part in and will run in Canada, the UK and New Zealand in February, and in Australia in June. For more information visit www.thepushupchallenge.au

Media contact:

Romina Favero, PR Director, The Push-Up Challenge

romina@rominafavero.com

+61 425 885 057