

Resolution3: Funding Mental Health Programs for Children

VIEW Clubs of Australia call on the State and Federal Government to allocate additional Commonwealth funding to all Primary and Secondary Schools to enable them to employ Mental Health professionals to be based in each school to improve Children's mental health outcomes.

Rationale:

The outcome would be the presence of school-based mental health professionals who identify and support students requiring additional and immediate assistance at the school level. This process involves allocating specific funds to employ a mental health professional whose responsibilities include implementing positive mental health programs, supporting small groups of children facing similar challenges, and assisting individuals identified with mental health issues that can be addressed within the school environment.

Arguments for the resolution:

- Early intervention at the school level improves outcomes for students identified as needing mental health support.
- Improved mental health outcomes lead to increased social and academic success, resilience, and better overall outcomes for children.
- Mental health professionals at the school can better understand and address the mental health needs of the students they work with.
- Parents and teachers may be more comfortable seeking support if it is school-based and delivered by on-site professionals.
- Teachers need to be aware of students' needs and benefit from professional support to address mental health challenges in their students.
- Addressing anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions in children and helping them develop coping mechanisms leads to better long-term outcomes and reduces the risk of adverse life events, including suicide.
- Schools require additional targeted funding to employ trained professionals who can support children's mental health, allowing teachers to focus on educational needs.
- Children should receive specialized mental health support at the school level during a mental health crisis.
- Ongoing support, rather than one-off interventions, is necessary to improve children's mental health outcomes and help them develop daily coping strategies. Issues such as bullying, school refusal, and suicidal tendencies can be managed by an on-site professional who understands the students and the school context.
- Seeking professional counseling outside of school can be prohibitively expensive, difficult to access, and beyond the resources of some parents.
- Government-funded mental health support for students is not only a necessary response to the increasing mental health challenges faced by young people but also an investment in the well-being, academic success, and future potential of students. Early and accessible mental health care improves students' chances of academic success, reduces the long-term economic and social costs of untreated mental health issues, and fosters a healthier, more resilient generation. Providing such funding is both a moral imperative and a practical solution to some of the most pressing challenges facing education systems today.

Arguments against the resolution

- The Australian government has made substantial investments in mental health funding and support for school students, recognising the critical role that mental health plays in academic success and overall well-being. Through programs like Headspace, Beyond Blue's Be You, and funding for school-based mental health professionals, students across the country have access to a range of services aimed at improving mental health outcomes. However, the availability and scope of these services can vary across states and territories, and there is ongoing advocacy for further expansion and consistency in mental health support for all students.
- Funding this program will require significant financial resources.
- Sourcing appropriately trained professionals to fill these roles in schools may present challenges.
- Some schools might face additional burdens related to providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate and support additional staff.