

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Kids reaching crisis point before getting help, psychologists warn**

The Kids Helpline Impact Report is evidence that the mental health system is failing to intervene early enough, according to the peak body for psychologists.

The Australian Association of Psychologists (AAPi) says the report, which found 129,000 young people contacted the helpline in 2025, with counsellors taking on average 14 emergency interventions a day, was deeply concerning.

"When children and young people are reaching the point of attempted suicide, abuse-related crises or emergency intervention before they can access support, it is a clear sign our mental health system is intervening far too late," said AAPi Executive Director, Tegan Carrison.

"For too many families, psychological support remains out of reach because of cost, workforce shortages and long waiting lists. By the time a young person reaches a crisis service, we have often missed multiple opportunities for earlier intervention.

"We cannot continue to rely on crisis services as the primary entry point into mental health care. Young Australians need access to timely, evidence-based psychological support before their circumstances deteriorate to the point of crisis."

Ms Carrison said the report reinforced the urgent need for government investment in prevention and early intervention.

"In our Federal Budget submission, we called for several measures to improve affordability, expand workforce capacity and increase access to psychological support for Australians of all ages.

"We called for all Commonwealth-funded youth mental health services to include dedicated workforce development and clinical placement programs to build the future workforce," she said.

"Introducing a Medicare bulk-billing incentive for psychology services would reduce out-of-pocket costs and improve affordability for families and expanding Better Access from 10 to 20 Medicare-subsidised psychology sessions for people with higher support needs would ensure a better level of care."

Ms Carrison said schools are one of the most important settings for early intervention, yet many students have little or no access to psychological support.

"The minimum ratio needs to be one school psychologist for every 500 students."

### **About the Australian Association of Psychologists Inc (AAPi)**

*The AAPi is a not-for-profit peak body for all psychologists that aims to preserve the rich diversity of psychological practice in Australia. Formed in 2010 by a group of passionate grassroots psychologists, the AAPi's primary goal is to address inequality in the profession and represent all psychologists and their clients equally to government and funding bodies. Its primary mission is to lobby for equitable access for the Australian public to professional psychological services such as Medicare Better Access Scheme and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.*

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