

# The Importance of Mental Health to the Sustainability and Prosperity of Rural Communities

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the national depression initiative  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

# What is *beyondblue*?

## ***beyondblue* Mission**

Provide national focus and leadership that increases the capacity of the broader community to prevent depression and respond effectively.

## **Vision**

A society that understand and responds to the personal and social impact of depression and works actively to prevent and improve the quality of life of everyone affected.

- Focus on:
  - Community awareness of depression and destigmatisation
  - Consumer and carer participation
  - Prevention of depression and early intervention
  - Improved primary care
  - Research

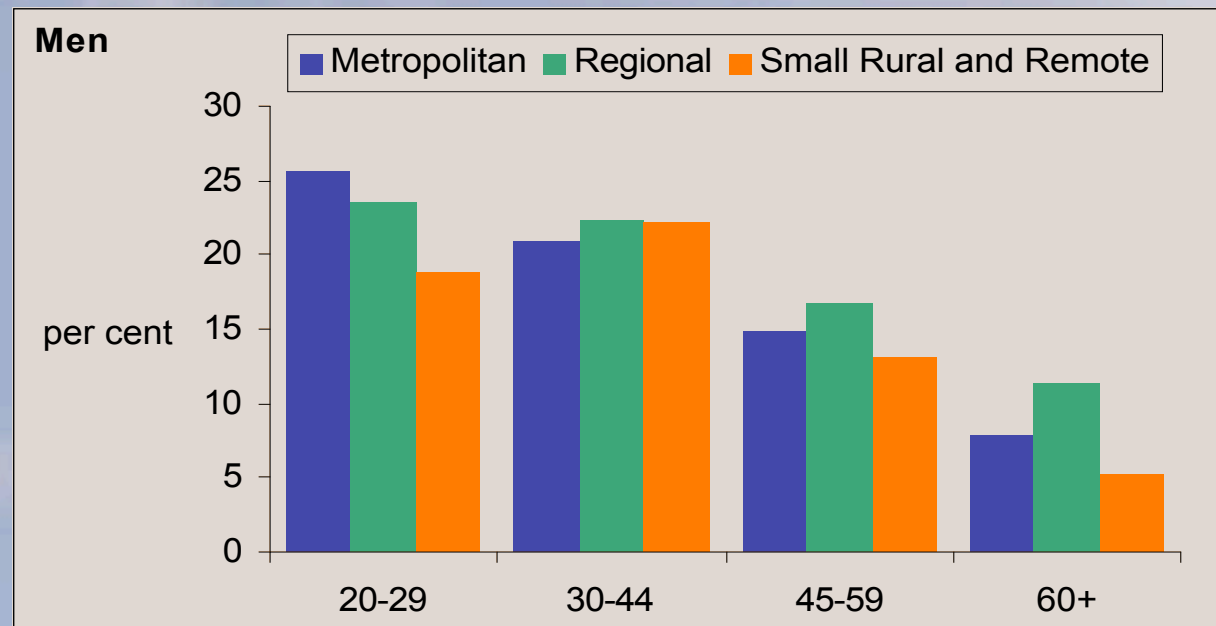


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# Depression in Rural Australia

- Depression is the most common mental illness. Associated with anxiety, substance misuse and suicide



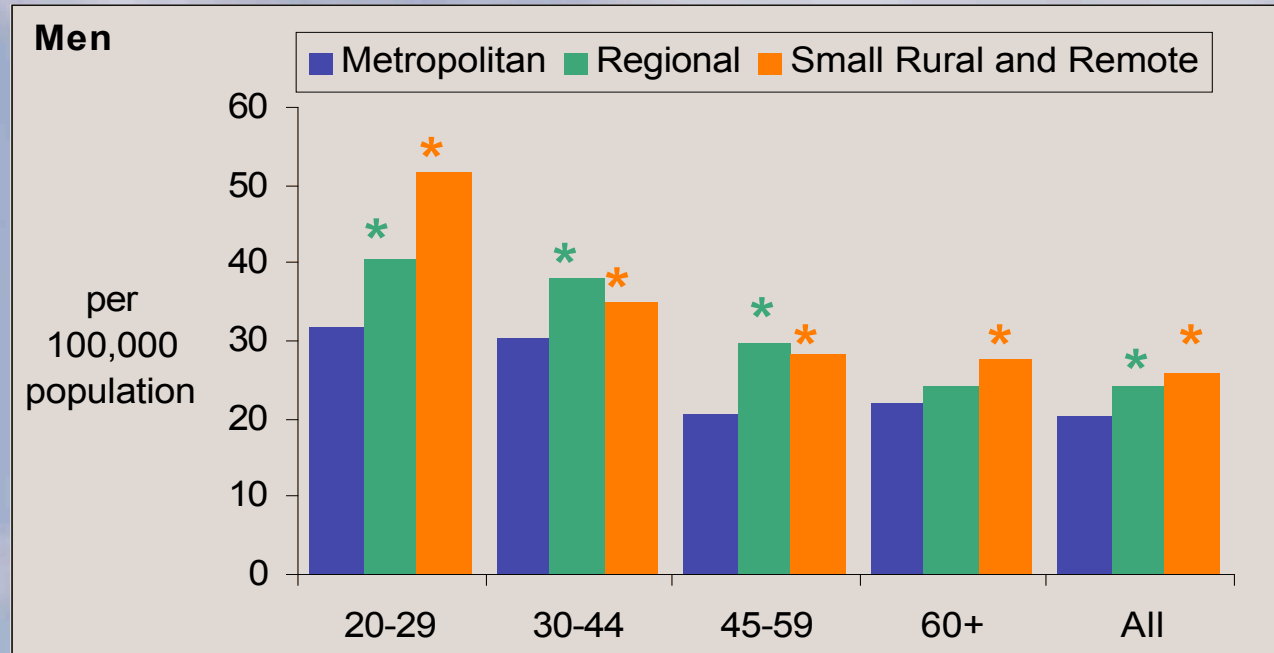
- Depression is at the same levels across metro, rural and remote communities



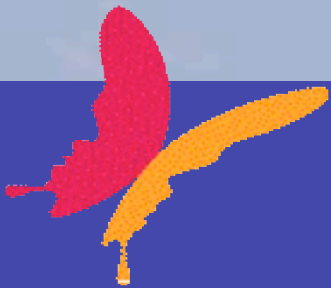
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# Suicide Rates



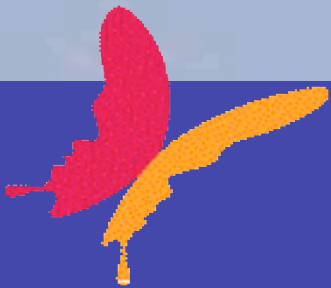
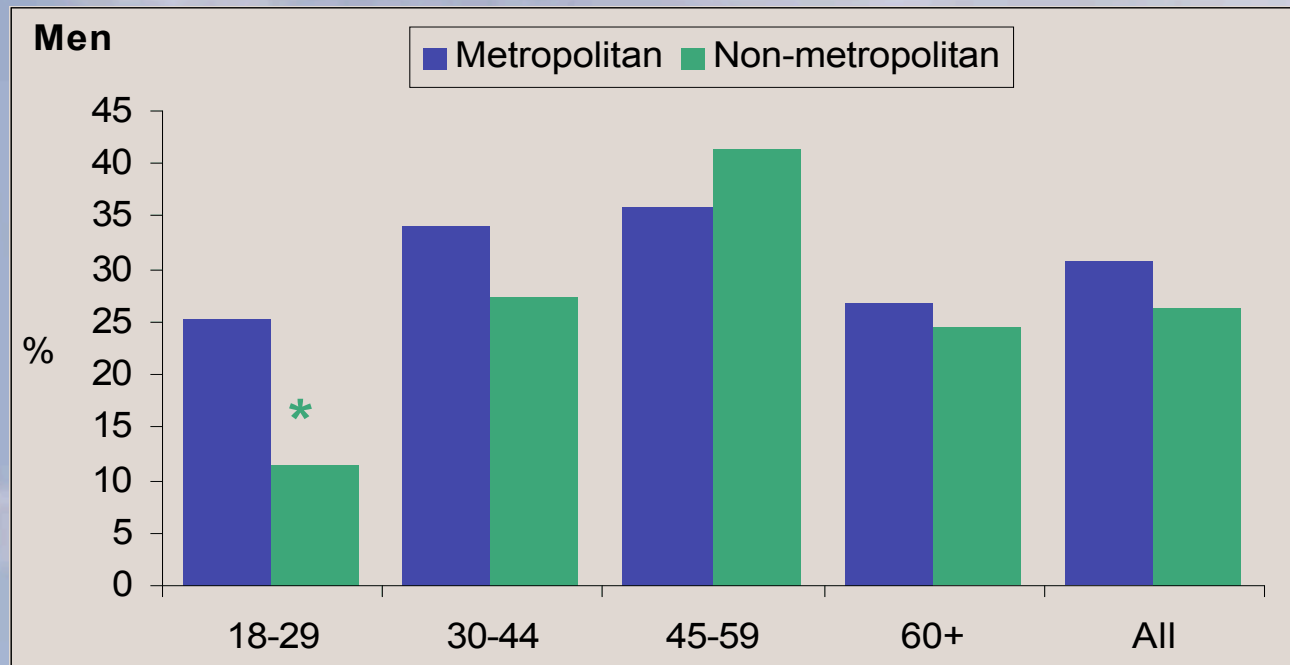
- **Suicide even higher in the farming group (when compared to rural males)**



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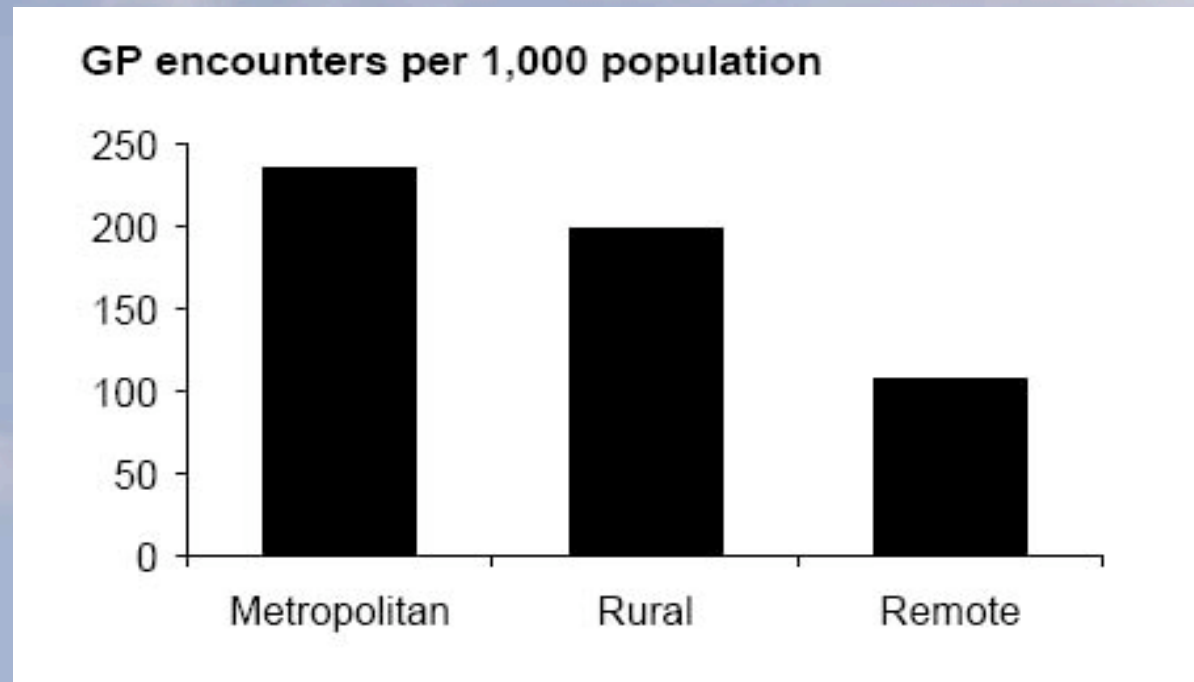
# Help Seeking for Symptoms



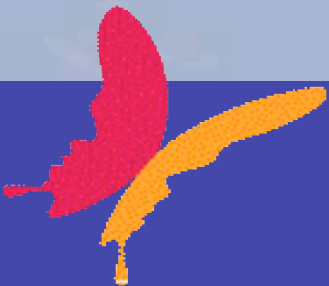
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# GP Mental Health Encounters / 1,000 population



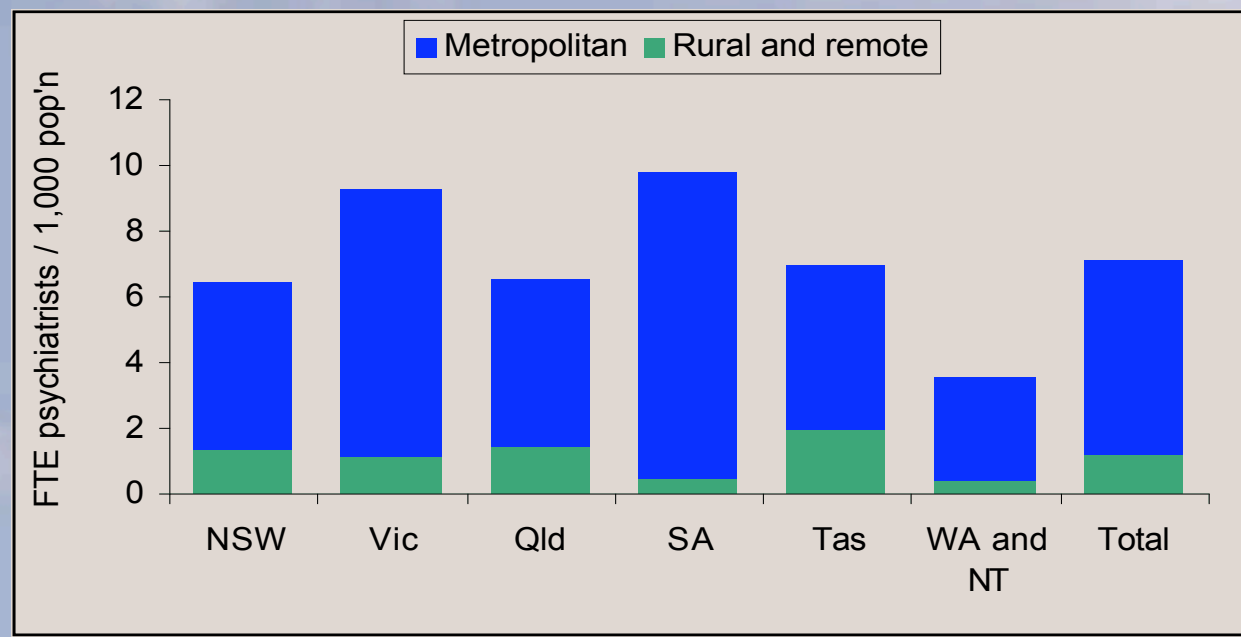
Source: AIHW (2003) Mental Health Services in Australia 2001-02



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# Psychiatrists / 1,000 population



Source: AIHW (2003) Mental Health Services in Australia 2001-02



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# Community Awareness and Destigmatisation

- **Rural communities have lower literacy and high stigma**
- **Increased understanding of depression and reduced stigma**
- **Targetted campaign at rural communitie**
  - **TV campaign**
  - **Media**
  - **Men's line and Just ask line**
  - **Community forums/Rotary tour**
  - **Information on drought and depression**
- **= increased help seeking?**
- **= more supportive communities**

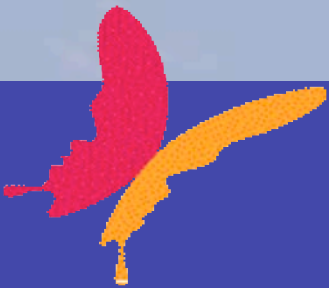


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# Prevention and Early Intervention

- **Schools, PND and Workplace – take findings of research into policy**
- **Sport/exercise and depression**
- **Expand to primary schools**
- **Chronic disease**

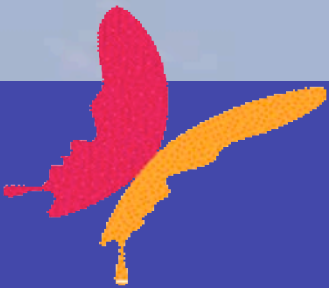


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# Primary Care

- **BOIMHC**
- **Expand and focus BOIMHC to rural areas**
- **More undergraduate mental health training for health professionals**
- **Expand the role of the nursing workforce in general practice**



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