

Science.
Compassion.
Action.



Impact Report
June 2020

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of this nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging from all nations across this country.



Message from the Chief Scientist and Director

Professor Helen Christensen

Science, compassion, action. At the Black Dog Institute (BDI), we take research out of the ivory tower and put it into action in health, educational, digital and corporate settings. The past year has exemplified this with many achievements – a snapshot of these is on the following pages.

With a focus on digital and online delivery, our tools and programs reach many people across Australia. We continue to conduct innovative and ground-breaking research in suicide prevention, youth and workplace mental health. Led by Leilani Darwin, we have recently established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre. Late last year, we released our iBobbly self-help app for Indigenous communities.

With the worst bushfire summer and, more recently the COVID-19 pandemic, the past year has been challenging for everyone. With BDI's strong track record in the mental health of first responders, we were called upon by governments, fire services and the wider community in response to the horrific bushfire season.

We were also able to quickly respond to the mental health needs of frontline healthcare workers during the COVID pandemic. With partners across Australia, The Essential Health Network was launched, providing information and self-help resources, as well as a personalised, free, confidential assessment and triage service through our clinic. It is designed specifically for those working under pressure within our hospital services.

BDI has rapidly responded to these challenges – a reflection of our dedicated team of researchers, lived experience staff, educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, project and administrative staff.

I am also in awe of the many generous supporters and donors who share our commitment to improving mental health in our communities. I can't thank you enough. It's because of you and your trust in us that we are able to make a difference.

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1 in 5 of us will experience symptoms of mental illness in any given year. In Australia that's around 5 million people. And roughly 60% of these people won't seek help.

As the only medical research institute in Australia to investigate mental health across the lifespan, our aim is to create a mentally healthier world for everyone.

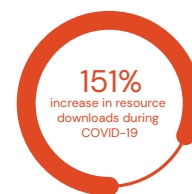
We do this through translational research. Integrating our research studies, education programs, digital tools and apps, clinical services, and public resources to discover new solutions,

foster connections and create real-world change.

Our partnerships with people with lived experience, federal, state and local governments, communities, schools, corporate Australia and others in the mental health sector enables us to drive evidence-informed change in mental health where it's needed most.



Here's what you helped us do this year



- > Launched our **online clinic**, a free mental health assessment tool which provides a report to download and offers suggested support services and free or low-cost resources
- > Launched **Phase 2 of our national suicide prevention research program** with world-leading experts to identify and test new evidence-based strategies.
- > Launched our **5-year Future Proofing Study**, the first-of-its-kind trial involving **20,000** young people across **400** high schools, which aims to determine whether depression can be prevented during adolescence.
- > Developed in partnership with emergency service agencies, a **comprehensive training package** to help managers and supervisors support their teams' mental health needs.
- > Publicly released **iBobbly**, a social and emotional wellbeing self-help app for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians recording **1434 downloads** in the first 10 months.
- > Established an **Australia-first, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre** to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are included in reform, policies and mental health initiatives.

Our response to the bushfire season

First responders perform a vital role in ensuring our safety and providing lifesaving practical assistance when we need them the most. Emergency service workers battled Australia's "Black Summer" bushfires for months during 2019 and early 2020, but the mental health implications of the devastation they witnessed could continue for years.

We know that

- > 1 in 12 emergency service workers experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- > Among retired first responders,

the number jumps to 1 in 6

- > Every 4.3 weeks, a fire fighter, paramedic or police officer dies by suicide.

Black Dog Institute is one of the few mental health research facilities worldwide with leadership expertise in workplace mental health in high-risk industries such as emergency services.

Your support enabled us to act swiftly during the most recent bushfire season. Evidence from our research was used to provide relevant and timely advice to assist government decision making and we engaged with many of our key stakeholder groups to provide expertise

and guidance. Some of our work included:

- > Providing ongoing support and guidance to the Rural Fire Service as they planned their response.
- > Meeting with NSW Government to discuss the support we could offer to them.
- > Advised Commonwealth Minister for Health and Minister for Emergency Management on mental health measures for National Bushfire Recovery Agency
- > Associate Professor Sam Harvey contributing to ABC's 4 part 7:30 special on

the lasting impacts of the 'Black Summer'.

We continue to develop strategies, programs and interventions, and advocate for policies that will lead to better-quality mental health outcomes for all Australians. Preventative interventions are at the core of Black Dog Institute's mission.

We can't afford to ignore the mental health challenges that emergency service workers can face on the job. Your support has helped us to protect the mental health of our first responders and will continue to have a significant impact on their lives.





Specialist mental health hub for health professionals during COVID-19

In May 2020, Black Dog Institute surveyed 300 health professionals. 60% said their mental health had become a little worse, and 20% a lot worse because of COVID-19.

Data from the SARS virus and other epidemics shows that many health workers have high levels of stress and many leave their careers immediately or soon after a significant event like COVID-19. Health professionals are at risk of short-term and longer-term mental health effects.

In response to this, and with additional funding from the Australian Government, Black Dog Institute is leading the development of a high quality, healthcare hub to provide advice about anxiety, PTSD and depression for healthcare

workers. The Essential Network (TEN) for health professionals enables users of the service to select the type of support best suited to them and their situation. The service is digital-based, providing a range of evidence-based tools, with referral pathways to specialist psychiatric and psychological support where needed.

TEN ensures health professionals are provided with an evidence-based, quality service to protect their mental health. This rapid national mental health response to COVID-19 has been critical for health professionals during a very challenging time.

We can only continue to be so responsive because of the ongoing support of our work.

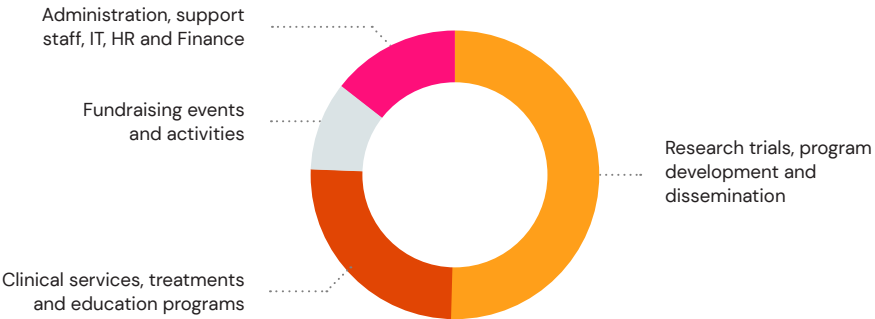


How funds are used

Black Dog Institute understands it is important for you to know how donations contribute to our work. We appreciate all financial contributions and strive to ensure funds are used wisely, efficiently and in line with our finance, expenditure and governance policies.

In FY19, 75.4 cents of every dollar donated to us directly funds our innovative mental health research, clinical treatments and education programs, while the remainder enables us to make sure we’re operating as efficiently as possible and sustainably planning for the future. Your donation contributes to ensuring we can continue to scale our programs and create a mentally healthier world for everyone.

Breakdown of our expenditure*



FY19		
Research trials, program development and dissemination	\$12,832,327	50.14%
Clinical services, online treatments and education programs	\$6,468,525	25.28%
Fundraising events and activities	\$2,062,381	8.06%
Administration, support staff, IT, HR and Finance	\$4,227,303	16.52%
Total	\$25,590,536	100%

*FY19 are the latest available audited financials

Black Dog Institute is a registered non-profit organisation with deductible gift recipient status, and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible. We are independently audited. For our full audited financial statements, please refer to our records on our website.

Thank You

By supporting us, you are helping us turn research into action by allowing us to plan ahead. These donations allow us to continue to support mental health by helping us plan and invest for the future. It is only because of you that we know we can continue to support our vital work.



During this challenging time if you, a family member or a friend are in immediate danger or psychological distress, we strongly encourage you to get in contact with the following crisis services:

- > Emergency: 000
- > Lifeline: 13 11 14
- > Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- > MensLine: 1300 78 99 78
- > Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

We are the voice of mental health science

To find out more about the
Black Dog Institute or any of
our programs please visit:

blackdoginstitute.org.au



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