

## Message from the Chairperson

Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) is the oldest not-for-profit, non-government mental health organisation in Australia, serving the community since 1930. The MHFA has grown strength to strength over the past few years, with Victorian Mental Health Month in 2018, to National Mental Health Month occurring in 2019, 2020 and this year in 2021.

Last year, COVID-19 did not stop us from achieving our National Mental Health Month campaign. I am proud to say, we successfully shifted many events to a virtual platform, very much being able to pursue our objectives of raising awareness and advocating for better Australian mental health.

A highlight of last year's campaign was reaching out to 100,000 Australians all across the country for our National Walks for Mental Health, both virtually through our MHFA app, and physically in some states. What a grand success that was.

This year's National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign will occur from the 1st to the 31st of October. National Mental Health Month is a program that the MHFA is extremely proud of, and we intend to reach out to and educate as many Australians as possible, to help reduce stigma and facilitate positive and non-judgemental discussion surrounding the important topic of mental health in Australia. With one in five Australians experiencing a mental health illness, it is time we give mental health due attention, and that is exactly what the MHFA is wanting to achieve.

In 2021, with the pandemic still affecting many of us, we decided not to give up once again, curating a carefully chosen blend of virtual and physical events for Australians to participate in. This year, we have a new and improved MHFA app, giving people the opportunity to participate in National Mental Health Month from the palms of their hands. This year's theme is 'Mental Health and Post-Pandemic Recovery Challenges and Resilience'.

At the MHFA, We pride ourselves in making sure all of our programs are for the community and powered by the community. We have a vast growing network of Multicultural Ambassadors, Youth Ambassadors and Future Leaders, who further the community voice in promoting mental health and wellbeing. Our multicultural network has inspired our educational and multicultural webinars, as an initiative to assist individuals cope with success during the pandemic.

Finally, I thank our patrons, board members, staff members, scientific advisory committee members, multicultural ambassadors, youth ambassadors, future leaders, volunteers, and well-wishers of the Foundation for their contribution towards organising all the events within this year's National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign. With your support, we can achieve many great things for this nation's future regarding the reduction of mental health issues and the stigma that shadows them.

I wish everyone involved all the best for National Mental Health Month 2021.



Vasan Srinivasan

Chairperson, Mental Health Foundation Australia