



**REACH  
OUT.COM**

# Media kit

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# Topics we comment on

ReachOut can provide expertise, comment and background for news stories and current affairs on the areas below, including their relevance to young people's mental health.

- Sex and relationships
- School, uni and study
- Friends and family
- Employment
- Young men
- Young women
- Bullying, abuse and violence
- Rural and regional life
- Cultural identity
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- LGBTQI - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer, questioning and intersex
- Self-harm
- Disability

# About ReachOut

Since launching as the world's first online mental health service for young people in 1998, ReachOut has grown to become Australia's leading e-mental health service. Today, more than 1.8 million young people, teachers and health professionals access ReachOut's evidence-based content and online tools each year.

In Australia, more than 70% of people who need mental health support do not receive help. ReachOut is committed to accelerating the pathway to early intervention, and enabling effective and accessible treatment services.

Followed by friends and family, the internet is the first place teenagers turn to for information and support. ReachOut works closely with young people and experts to provide a service that is backed by research and relevant for people aged 14–25 years old, made up by hundreds of fact sheets, free apps, community forums, stories, online tools and videos. ReachOut also provides teachers and professionals who work with young people a range of specially designed resources that support mental health promotion (see [ReachOut Professionals](#)).

ReachOut collaborates across sectors and works closely with allied and mental health providers, but is not a clinical service. ReachOut is a gateway for young Australians seeking trusted and relevant advice about anything from everyday issues through to tough times, directing visitors to complementary services or emergency support when needed.

# Media contacts

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# CEO profile – Jono Nicholas

BA (Hons) and MPH

**A member of the original team that launched ReachOut in 1998, Jono Nicholas is one of Australia’s most prominent and passionate advocates for the mental health of young people.**

A father of three boys himself, Jono is driven by the belief that rethinking the approach to mental health care in Australia will allow all young people to access help during tough times.

Central to Jono’s vision is alleviating the pressure placed on traditional mental health care options by embracing the scale that is realised through online self-help channels.

Since joining the organisation as Director of Programs, Jono has helped transform ReachOut (then Inspire Foundation) into Australia’s leading youth mental health service. Following his pivotal role in establishing ReachOut in Australia and then Ireland, Jono was appointed as CEO of ReachOut Australia in 2010.

Jono holds an Honours Degree in Psychology and a Masters in Public Health, and has a background in child psychology and human rights. During his time at ReachOut, Jono has provided training to Indonesia on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and co-authored a report for UNICEF on the situation of children and women living in Cambodia.

In addition to his leadership of ReachOut, Jono contributes a significant amount of his time and expertise to the following initiatives:

- Board Member – The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA)
- Board Member – Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)
- Member – Centre of Research Excellence in Suicide Prevention (CRESP): Advisory Board
- Member – R U OK? Scientific Group
- Member – Hunter Institute of Mental Health: Expert Panel on NSW Community Guidelines for Discussing Suicide
- Member – NSW Mental Health Commission: Research Advisory Group
- Member – NSW Mental Health Commission: Building Community Resilience and Wellbeing Working Group
- Former Member – NSW Suicide Prevention Ministerial Advisory Committee
- Former Member – NSW Commission for Children and Young People: Expert Advisory Committee

# Guidelines for reporting on mental health in social media

**Social media is incredibly powerful for sparking discussion about issues affecting young people and the community, but there are a few important things to keep in mind:**

- Do not post graphic details. Particularly about self-harming behaviour, drug use, abuse and trauma, eating disorders.
- Do not use triggering language; this type of descriptive language can cause someone to re-live a feeling associated with a trauma they have experienced. Instead use general terms like “self-harm”, “eating disorder” and “assault” instead of the details of exactly what happened.
- Provide online support URLs as much as possible, as young people say the internet is the first place they turn for information and support after family and friends.
- Ensure the privacy of people interviewed for stories based on what’s been expressly agreed. For example, if they’ve agreed to using only their first name, consider how mentioning them on social media could link them to the story.
- Never provide professional advice. Although you want to help readers, do not provide medical, financial, legal or other advice. Instead direct them to ReachOut where they can find the right help for their needs.

If you would like more information on the above, please contact ReachOut. For detailed information on the responsible reporting and portrayal of mental illness and suicide, check out the Mindframe Media Guidelines at [mindframe-media.info/for-media](http://mindframe-media.info/for-media).

# Issues affecting young people's lives

## Sex and relationships

Having sex for the first time, breaking up, and experiencing conflict in relationships are key issues in young people's lives.

Sex and relationships are closely tied to intense emotions – both positive and negative – and can affect people differently. As young people begin to deal with sex and relationships for the first time, it's important to support them in developing the skills needed to navigate and enjoy these experiences safely.

## School, uni and study

In January and February each year, close to 1,876,000 young Australians aged 14–25 return to formal study.<sup>1</sup> Whilst many of life's great experiences happen at school or uni, young people reliably cite pressures from school, uni and study as major issues of concern.<sup>2</sup>

With 80% of young people admitting that stress can impact their physical and mental health,<sup>3</sup> it's important they know where to turn for advice on dealing with it – and know that their marks do not define them.

## Friends and family

Friends and family act as a crucial support network for young people, helping them through both the good and tough times of life.

The wellbeing of family and friends who care for someone living with mental illness can be particularly challenging. With more than a third of carers facing severe or extremely severe depression themselves, it is vital that they have access to resources and support.<sup>4</sup>

## Employment

Finding work can be overwhelming for many of us, but it is a challenge that is particularly tough for young people.

Unemployment already affects 6.2% of young Australians, with a further 14% struggling to find work.<sup>5</sup> Compared with the rest of the population, fewer young people hold full-time positions and they are 3.5 times more likely to be underemployed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, *6227.0 - Education and Work, Australia*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> Fildes, J, Robbins, A, Cave, L, Perrens, B, and Wearing, A, 2014, *Mission Australia's 2014 Youth Survey Report*, Mission Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Casey, L, Liang Pui-Tak, R, 2014, *Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2014*, Australian Psychological Society.

<sup>4</sup> Deakin University and Carers Australia, 2007, *Australian Unity Wellbeing Index: Survey 17.1 Report 17.1*, Melbourne

## Young men

One in five men experience anxiety and one in eight will have depression at some stage in their lives.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, stigma remains a key issue and young men are still reluctant to seek help. Compared with 30% of young women, only 20% of young men experiencing a mental disorder will actually access support.<sup>8</sup> Also of concern is the fact that young men are more likely than young women to have a substance use disorder (16% of males compared with 10% of females), with harmful use of alcohol the most common substance use disorder (9% of all young people).<sup>9</sup>

## Young women

There has never been a better time to be a young woman in Australian history. Young women are more engaged in education and the workforce than ever before, with 48% of young women seeking vocational or higher education compared with 41% of young men.<sup>10</sup>

However, domestic violence, eating disorders and body image remain pressing issues for young women. It's particularly concerning that 1-10% of young women self-harm, compared with 1-4% of young men.<sup>11</sup>

## Bullying, abuse and violence

Whether physical violence or emotional abuse, most people have experienced bullying, abuse or violence in some way.

With someone else present during 87% of bullying interactions, the actions of bystanders may be the key to reducing bullying.<sup>12</sup> When a bystander intervenes, it shows the person bullying that their behaviour is not acceptable, and provides an avenue of support for the person who is being bullied.

To prevent deeper impact on mental health and wellbeing, it's important that young people have the resilience and techniques to deal with such conflict.

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<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014, *6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, Nov 2014*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014, *6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, Nov 2014*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008, *4326.0 - National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results 2007*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008, *4326.0 - National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results 2007*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>9</sup> Reavley, NJ, Cvetkovski, S, et al., 2010, Help-seeking for substance use, anxiety and affective disorders among young people: results from the 2007 Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, *Aust N Z J Psychiatry*, 44(8):729-35.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010, *1370.0 - Measures of Australia's Progress 2010*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>11</sup> Strickland, M, 2006, *An information booklet about self-harm*, Queensland Health, Brisbane.

[http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/pages/chess/hsp/Information/revise\\_selfharm\\_finalweb.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/pages/chess/hsp/Information/revise_selfharm_finalweb.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Cross, D, Shaw, T, Hearn, L, Epstein, M, Monks, H, Lester, L, Thomas, L, 2009, *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS)*, Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

## Rural and regional life

Because of a lack of support and services in rural and regional areas, young people growing up in these parts of Australia can find it very challenging to access help that meets their needs, increasing the importance of online support.<sup>13</sup>

Moving to the city to study or for work can also be tough for young people from rural and regional areas. The support networks of friends and family they're used to may no longer be available, making them especially vulnerable to the impact of negative life events.

## Cultural identity

Australia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world – and this extends to young Australians too. Even though diversity should be celebrated, as many as 7 in 10 young people have experienced racism.<sup>14</sup> Unsurprisingly, this can have a significant impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing.

Many young people from diverse backgrounds turn to ReachOut for help and support, with 17% of young people accessing the service born overseas and 9% mainly speaking a language other than English at home.<sup>15</sup>

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

Young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds can face unique challenges. Significantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 18-24 years are more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous people to have experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress in the last month (33% compared with 13%).<sup>16</sup>

However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are more connected than ever before, relying on their smartphones as a means to stay in touch with their friends and family. They also turn to online platforms to find information and self-help on issues affecting their lives, particularly in remote areas.<sup>17</sup>

Encouragingly, 3-5% of young people that engage with ReachOut identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander,<sup>18</sup> showing that technology and the speed at which information is available online can significantly assist these young people.

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<sup>13</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, *4102.0 - Australian Social Trends Mar 2011*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>14</sup> Mansouri, F, Jenkins, L, Morgan, L, and Taouk, M, 2009, *The Impact of Racism on the Health and Wellbeing of Young Australians*, Foundation for Young Australians and Deakin University, Melbourne, [http://www.fya.org.au/app/theme/default/design/assets/publications/Impact\\_of\\_Racism\\_FYA\\_report.pdf](http://www.fya.org.au/app/theme/default/design/assets/publications/Impact_of_Racism_FYA_report.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <sup>15</sup> ReachOut Australia 2014, *Annual ReachOut.com User Survey 2013*, ReachOut Australia, Sydney.

<sup>16</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *4725.0 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing: A focus on children and youth Apr 2011*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

<sup>17</sup> Fran, E, Rachinger, C, Waycott, J, Morrissey, P, Kelada, O, Nordlinger, R, 2012, *'Keeping Intouchable': A community report on the use of mobile phones and social networking by young Aboriginal people in Victoria*, Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society (IBES), University of Melbourne, Melbourne, <http://broadband.unimelb.edu.au/resources/white-paper/2012/keeping-intouchable.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> ReachOut Australia 2014, *Annual ReachOut.com User Survey 2013*, ReachOut Australia, Sydney.

## LGBTQI - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer, questioning and intersex

Young LGBTQI Australians may be marginalised, alienated, rejected and bullied, which can have negative effects on their mental health and wellbeing. In fact, 16% of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer, questioning or intersex have attempted suicide, and 33% have harmed themselves as a result of widespread homophobic and transphobic harassment and violence in Australian society.<sup>19</sup>

Young Australians need an anonymous, safe place to explore information about sexuality, gender, and being intersex. Every month, more than 20,000 LGBTQI young people turn to ReachOut for this reason, receiving help, support and advice about their experience.<sup>20</sup>

### Self-harm

Self-harm comes in many forms and can be very damaging to a person's physical and mental health, and as many as 6–7% of young Australians engage in self-harm in any 12 month period.<sup>21</sup> Self-harm is not a mental illness, but it does signal that someone may be going through a very tough time. Young people use self-harm as a way of trying to cope with strong feelings and emotions – it isn't always 'attention seeking', as commonly thought.

### Disability

There are an estimated 6.8% Australians under 25 years of age living with a disability.<sup>22</sup> Living with a disability, or living with someone who has a disability, can have a huge impact on a young person's life.

Whether the disability is something they were born with or affected them later in life, it is important for young people to know that it does not define who they are, and it doesn't have to get in the way of what they want to achieve.

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<sup>19</sup> Robinson, KH, Bansel, P, Denson, N, Ovensen, G & Davies, C, 2014, *Growing Up Queer: Issues Facing Young Australians Who Are Gender Variant and Sexuality Diverse*, Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne. [http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Growing\\_Up\\_Queer1.pdf](http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Growing_Up_Queer1.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> ReachOut Australia 2014, *LGBTQI Users of ReachOut.com*, ReachOut Australia, Sydney.

<sup>21</sup> De Leo D, Heller TS, 2004, Who are the kids who self-harm? An Australian self-report school survey. *Med J Aust*, 181(3): 140-144.

<sup>22</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, *4446.0 - Disability, Australia, 2009*, Commonwealth Government, Canberra.

# Available talent & topics

Name	Role	Subject matter
Jono Nicholas	CEO, ReachOut Australia	Sex and relationships School, uni and study Friends and family Employment Young men Young women Bullying, abuse and violence Rural and regional life Cultural identity Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people LGBTQI - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, questioning and intersex Self-harm Disability
Kerrie Buhagiar	Director of Service Delivery, ReachOut Australia	Sex and relationships School, uni and study Friends and family Employment Young men Young women Bullying, abuse and violence Rural and regional life Cultural identity Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people LGBTQI - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, questioning and intersex Self-harm Disability
Billy Russell	Youth Involvement Coordinator, ReachOut Australia	General youth experience
Andrew Morley	Home & Away actor and ReachOut Ambassador	Campaign-specific