

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019-2020

PREVENTION  
UNITED

Joining forces to prevent mental health conditions

# Contents

ABOUT PREVENTION UNITED .....	3
A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR .....	4
BRINGING TOGETHER PASSIONATE PEOPLE .....	6
THE PREVENTION UNITED TEAM .....	7
SUPPORTING AUSTRALIANS TO ENHANCE THEIR MENTAL WELLBEING.....	8
LAUNCH OF THE STAYING AHEAD E-BOOK .....	8
COPING WITH CORONAVIRUS .....	9
HELPING PARENTS TO PROTECT THEIR.....	9
TEENAGER'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	
ASSISTING FRONTLINE WORKERS IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE.....	11
WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA .....	11
ADVOCATING ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY .....	12
FLATTENING THE CURVE OF MENTAL .....	14
ILL-HEALTH WEBINAR SERIES	
BUILDING CAPACITY IN PROMOTION AND PREVENTION.....	16
FINANCIAL SUMMARY.....	18

# About Prevention United

**Prevention United is a mental health charity with a difference.**

Our mission is to work with individuals, families, organisations, and communities to promote mental wellbeing and prevent mental health conditions by fostering their strengths and reducing their risks.

We are one of the very few mental health organisations in Australia that has an exclusive focus on promotion and prevention in the mental health field.

At present, almost 1 in 2 Australians will experience a mental health condition over the course of their life. These conditions are highly distressing, potentially disabling and increase the risk of suicide. Stopping these conditions before they start will avert suffering and save lives. It will also save the community billions of dollars each year.

Mental health conditions are not inevitable, and there is now strong scientific evidence to show a sizeable proportion of conditions can be prevented through the use of evidence-based programs and public policies that target the underlying causes of these conditions.

Yet currently the Australian Government spends less than 1% of the mental health budget on prevention and 99% on mental healthcare services. As a result Australians are missing out on access to proven effective programs and services designed to help them stay mentally well.

This needs to change and we are working to make it happen. We invite you to support us in our endeavours by following us on social media, subscribing to our e-newsletter or donating to our work.

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## Join forces with us to prevent mental health conditions

## A word from our Executive Director

What a dramatic year it's been! The 2019-2020 financial year started strongly, and we were busy working on new and existing projects encompassing self-care, parenting, school- and university-based mental health promotion, and workplace mental wellbeing.

Then, on 25 January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Australia and by March, the World Health Organization had declared we were dealing with a global pandemic. Our world had suddenly changed.

Stress levels soared across the community as lives and livelihoods were thrown upside down by the unprecedented social and economic measures needed to control the spread of the virus.

At Prevention United we immediately realised that COVID-19 was a mental health crisis, as well as a health crisis and we mobilised to provide the community with practical resources to look after their mental wellbeing.

As part of this, we partnered with Associate Professor Marie Yap from Monash University to launch her Partners in Parenting program for parents with adolescents aged 12-17.

We also continued our partnership with Federation University and Ballarat Health Services to develop a workplace wellbeing digital tool designed to promote the mental health of workers in residential aged care.

On the advocacy front, we collaborated with several high-profile organisations to call for greater government investment in mental health and submitted a proposal to the National Cabinet that focused on initiatives that could be implemented to prevent a rise in new onset depression and anxiety conditions as a result of the pandemic. We also launched our highly successful "Flattening the Curve of Mental Ill-Health" webinar series which showcased initiatives that could be implemented to avert a surge in mental health conditions.

Like others, we were pleased to see governments around Australia introduce several excellent measures to bolster our frontline mental healthcare services, as well as economic reform packages to

support Australians impacted by job losses and business closures given the well-established association between financial stress, unemployment, and mental ill-health.

A focus on the mental health and wellbeing of Australians is now more important than ever. We need to tackle the underlying causes that contribute to poor mental health while also expanding access to frontline mental health services.

Promotion, prevention, and mental healthcare are complementary endeavours, and a comprehensive approach is needed if we wish to avert the personal, social, and economic impacts of mental health conditions in the wake of COVID-19, and into the future.

As we continue to negotiate the challenges ahead, Prevention United remains committed to working with individuals, organisations, and communities to promote their strengths and reduce their risks, and we call on governments around Australia to bolster their funding in promotion, prevention and mental healthcare.

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## It's time to get serious about prevention

## Bringing together passionate people

Over the last 12 months we have welcomed several new people and said goodbye to others.

Mr Pat O'Leary joined the Prevention United Board in February. Pat is the Deputy CEO of YSAS. He is a mental health operations and service development professional with over three decades experience in the primary and specialist mental health sectors.

Pat has previously worked extensively in service development roles beginning in the 1990s with the decommissioning and rebuilding of the Victorian Mental Health Service System; for five years on building the National headspace network including the commissioning of over 60 centres; and most recently with Beyond Blue on the National rollout of 'The Way Back', an aftercare service for people who have attempted suicide.

Operationally, Pat has previously managed the Child and Youth Mental Health Service at Austin Health, the Community Mental Health Service at the RCH, and is currently the Deputy CEO at the Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS). Pat also had significant early career experience in the Youth Justice and Homeless service systems, and for three years managed the Community Infrastructure Unit at Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Pat understands the impact that mental health conditions have on people's lives and can see the enormous potential that effective prevention strategies can have on reducing distress and hardship. He looks forward to contributing to the Prevention United mission.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to induct new Directors onto the Board as the term of our founding Directors comes to an end.

We said goodbye to our two fabulous volunteers Charmaine and Sarah, and to Stacey-Lee who was undertaking a student placement with us. Charmaine and Sarah assisted us with a variety of projects, while Stacey-Lee worked on a Policy Brief and Position Statement on Child Maltreatment and Mental Health. We also welcomed new volunteers Emily, Lauren, Jess, Amber, Marlee, Gemma and Toni who are helping to support the Partners in Parenting online program.

We had the privilege of continuing to work with our Scientific Advisory Committee members Professors Tony Jorm, Harriet Hiscock, Cathy Mihalopoulos, Felicia Huppert, John Toumbourou, Michael Berk and James Scott, and our research partners A/Professor Yap, Professor Britt Klein, and Dr Lisa Clinnick.

We also had the pleasure of working with Beyond Blue, headspace, the Black Dog Institute, Everymind, the Matilda Centre and the Alliance for the Prevention of Mental Disorders on webinars and advocacy activities.

We would like to thank everyone connected with Prevention United over the last 12 months for their support and assistance in making the prevention of mental health conditions a reality.

We would particularly like to thank our major donors and funders including Betty Kitchener, the Nolan Family and Besen Family, the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, and WorkSafe Victoria.

## THE PREVENTION UNITED TEAM



Stephen Carbone,  
Executive Director



Luke Martin,  
Head of Programs



Lachlan Kent,  
Development Manager

# Supporting Australians to enhance their mental wellbeing

## LAUNCH OF THE STAYING AHEAD E-BOOK

Looking after your mental wellbeing is just as important as looking after your physical wellbeing.

High levels of mental wellbeing are associated with a wide range of benefits including increased creativity, better learning and job performance, greater productivity, better relationships, more pro-social behaviours and civic engagement, lower rates of mental health conditions, better physical health, and longer life expectancy.

Putting time and energy into enhancing your mental wellbeing is definitely worthwhile.

Over the last 12-months Prevention United has focused on increasing people's understanding of the importance and benefits of promoting and protecting their mental wellbeing. We proudly launched the first part of our Staying Ahead wellbeing suite of resources and programs.

The Staying Ahead e-book includes practical tips on how people can look after their mental wellbeing. We promoted the e-book through our newsletter subscribers and via social media. Well over 300 people had accessed this easy-to-read resource over the course of the year. The Staying Ahead e-book has received positive feedback and an average reader rating of 4.7/5.

What people are saying:

"Very practical and concise guide to improving health and wellbeing".

"It's a very easy to read guide with examples and lots of tools to try and resources to use"

"Great to have a very readable and informative book for myself, but also to pass on to others".

"I found the booklet easy to read and helpful. Many thanks".

"Fantastic resource!"

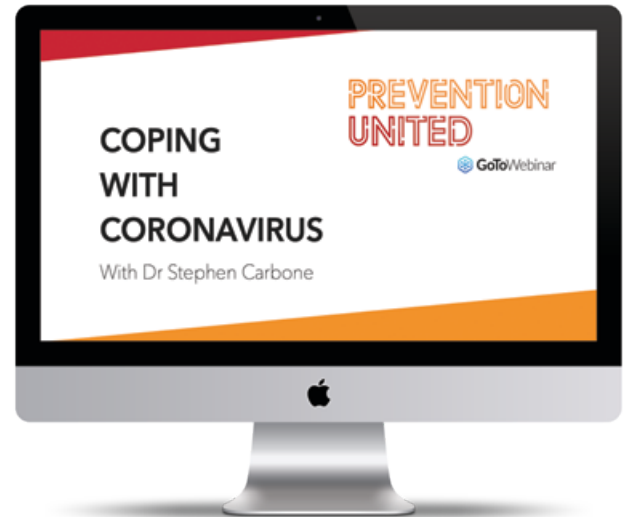


This free e-book is available from our website.



## COPING WITH CORONAVIRUS

In April, at the height of the first lockdown in Australia, we ran Coping with Coronavirus webinars for the general public. We also partnered with our colleague Professor Britt Klein at Federation University to make her My Digital Health suite of self-care resources available free to everyone and provided self-care tips through regular social media posts.



## HELPING PARENTS TO PROTECT THEIR TEENAGER'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The environments in which we grow and develop have a significant influence on our mental health and wellbeing. Our home environment is particularly influential. Research shows that by providing parents with access to skills-building programs as well as practical, emotional, and material support can enable them to create family environments that promote positive child and adolescent development and mental wellbeing.

The brainchild of A/Professor Marie Yap, Partners in Parenting (PiP) is an international-first personalised online program that empowers parents to support their adolescent's mental health and reduce the risk of teenage depression. It is based on parenting guidelines supported by research evidence and expert consensus.

Prevention United received funding from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust to undertake a real-world implementation trial of PiP in partnership with Monash University.

The program went live on 10 March and by 30 June over 550 parents had registered to use the program. The feedback from parents has been very positive.

“This is such a great program and I look forward to implementing all the learnings” - parent.

“I’m finding the modules perfect for my concerns and eagerly anticipate the arrival of each module!” - parent

The recruitment phase of the evaluation project was completed in late June 2020 and the results of the evaluation are expected in the first half of 2021. In the meantime, the online program will continue to be freely available for parents until the end of 2020.

Prevention United is currently in conversations with various potential funders to ensure that we can continue to work in collaboration with A/Professor Marie Yap to make this wonderful program available to Australian parents free-of-charge.



Partners in Parenting reach and uptake

## ASSISTING FRONTLINE WORKERS IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

Our work environment can also have a significant influence on our mental wellbeing. People tend to be happier, more creative, and more productive in workplaces with a positive psychosocial climate. By contrast workers exposed to workplace psychosocial hazards such as high demand, low control, low support jobs, or interpersonal conflicts, bullying and harassment at work, are at risk of experiencing psychological injury or a work-related mental health condition.

That is why Prevention United is delighted to be part of the Wellbeing Track and Change Project supported by the WorkSafe WorkWell Mental Health Improvement Fund.

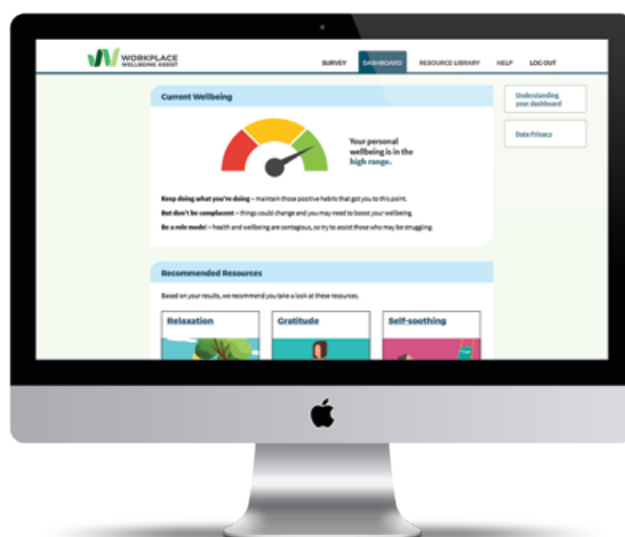
Working with Professor Britt Klein at Federation University Australia and Dr Lisa Clinnick at Ballarat Health Services (BHS), our project aims to support the mental wellbeing of frontline residential aged care workers by using a digital monitoring and decision support system to create a mentally healthy workplace.

The digital tool – dubbed Workplace Wellbeing Assist – allows frontline staff in residential aged care services to rate their mental wellbeing and their perceptions of their workplace culture. The tool tracks trends in the data and offers staff tailored self-care resources based on their personal ratings.

Staff data is also aggregated and anonymised to enable managers to gain insights into the mental wellbeing of their staff group and identify worrying trends in workplace risk factors that need to be addressed. Managers have access to a suite of resources

that enable them to take proactive steps to address the workplace psychosocial hazards that staff have identified in the regular pulse checks.

The project team has obtained ethics approval to trial and evaluate the WWA tool in residential aged care services managed by Ballarat Health Services and Colac Area Health. The trials will run through the second half of 2020, and results of the study will be available in the early months of 2021.

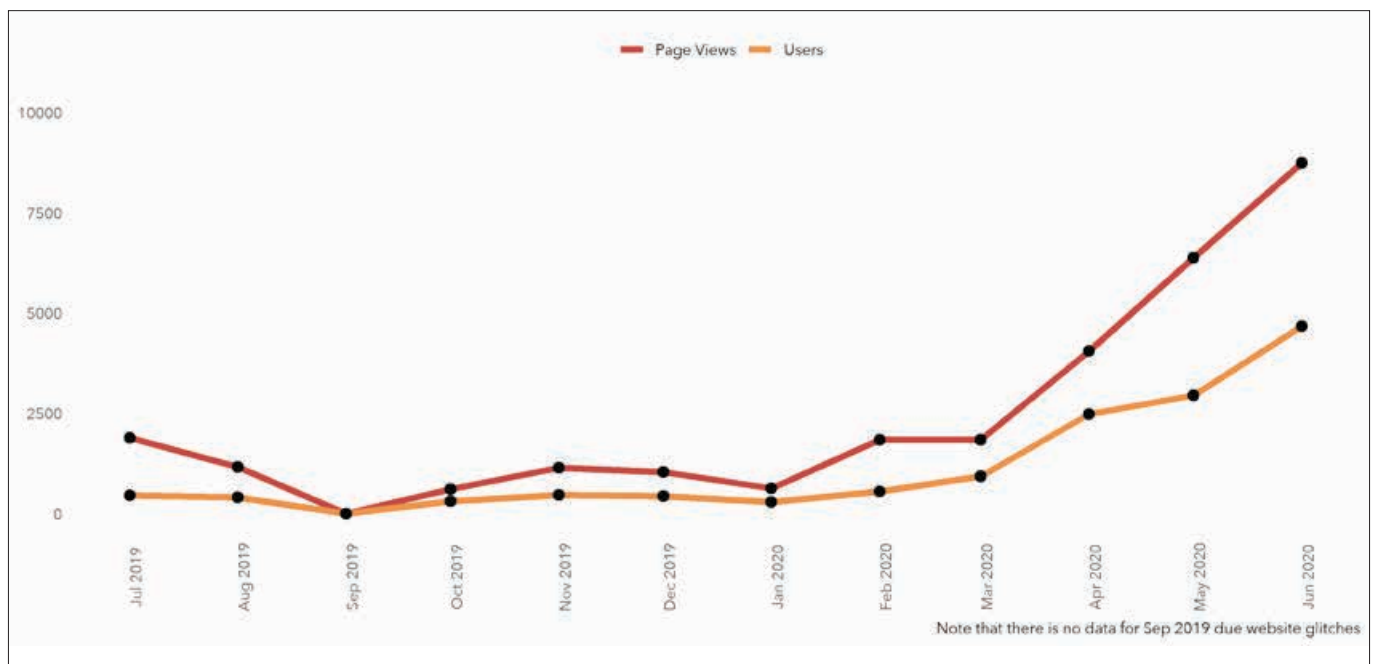


## WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We use our social media channels to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of focusing on promoting mental wellbeing and preventing mental health conditions. We also offer people practical tips and resources to assist them to promote and protect their mental health.

As a result, we saw a major increase in the number of followers on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and newsletter subscribers to well over 2,000 people - up from around 500 the previous year.

Our website traffic also increased dramatically over the course of the year to almost 12,000 unique website visitors, up from around 2,000 the previous year.



Website traffic

# Advocating on behalf of the community

Right now Australia has no policy, no framework, and no roadmap for how to prevent depression, anxiety, and other conditions from occurring despite the growing evidence this is possible.

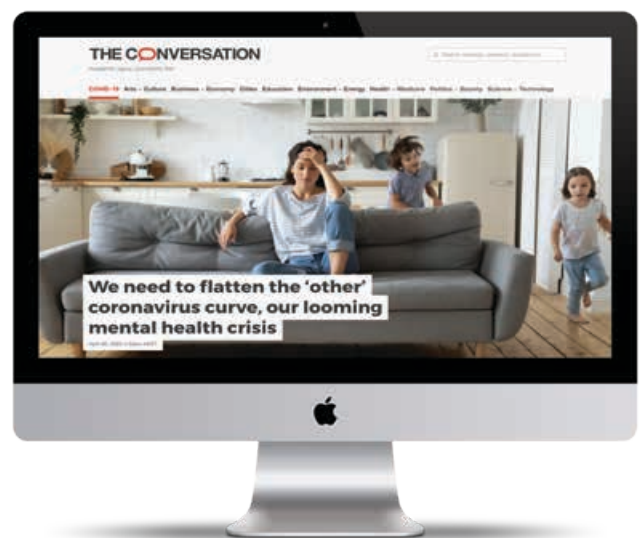
Government investment in prevention is also too low. At present less than 1% of the mental health budget goes towards primary prevention and 99% goes towards mental healthcare services.

But a focus on promotion and prevention is needed more than ever as Australians confront the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19. We are in a period of exceptionally high risk and there are already indications of a rise in depression and anxiety among people who have never experienced these conditions before.

Waiting until people experience a mental health crisis or mental health condition makes no sense. Prevention has to be a bigger part of our response in the months and years ahead.

That is why advocacy is a major part of our work at Prevention United.

In April, our Executive Director Dr Stephen Carbone and the Chair of our Scientific Advisory Committee Professor Anthony Jorm wrote an article for The Conversation on the importance of focusing on prevention to avert a rise in mental ill-health as a result of pandemic.



Stephen also had Op Ed published in The Australian newspaper and an editorial published in the Mental Health and Prevention journal highlighting the critical importance of adopting a two-pronged focus on primary prevention and treatment to flatten the looming curve of mental ill-health.

Following on from these publications we also hosted a webinar series titled “Flattening the curve of mental ill-health”. These webinars included guest appearances from our Scientific Advisory Committee, and colleagues from Beyond Blue, the Black Dog Institute, and the Matilda Centre. There was very strong interest in the webinars which were all very well attended. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to making the series a success, and everyone who attended.

## FLATTENING THE CURVE OF MENTAL ILL-HEALTH WEBINAR SERIES



Webinar reach and impact



8 webinars



13 presenters



2,000  
registrations



41,000  
social media reach



2,000  
social media engagements

The “flattening the curve of mental ill-health” series featured high-profile experts, including members of our Scientific Advisory Committee and CEOs and Directors from Beyond Blue, Black Dog Institute, and the Matilda Centre.



Over the last 12 months we have also been working closely with headspace, the Black Dog Institute, Everymind, the Matilda Centre, and the Alliance for the Prevention of Mental Disorders to develop a Prevention Consensus Statement. This statement summarises the rationale for increased action and investment in prevention, and lists six initial priority areas for action that will enable us to manage the mental health shocks of COVID-19, while creating the foundations of a high-functioning prevention system that could complement our mental healthcare system in the years ahead. The Consensus Statement is due to be released in October 2020.

We also continued to advocate for change through our submissions to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health, the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health, and the National Mental Health Commission Vision 2030 consultations. The promotion of mental wellbeing and the prevention of mental health conditions has been ignored for too long, and these inquiries provide a once in a generation opportunity for governments to allocate much needed funding to this neglected area of mental health policy.



# Building capacity in promotion and prevention

Mental health is everyone's business, and we can all play a role in promoting mental wellbeing and preventing mental health conditions within our own life, as well as in our schools, workplaces, and communities. The more people involved in this endeavour the better!

Another big part of our focus is therefore to work closely with organisations interested in building a focus on the promotion of mental wellbeing and the prevention of mental health conditions within their settings.

Over the course of 2019-2020, this consulting work drew us into the issue of

mental health and wellbeing in educational settings.

In the first half of the year we partnered with Winc to produce a suite of resources for educators in early learning services and primary and secondary schools. The One-Step-Ahead resources outlined how educators could take a whole-of-service and whole-of-school approach to promotion, prevention, and early intervention in mental health. We also conducted two webinars for educators on Educator Self-Care and Managing Anxiety in the classroom.





Prevention United was also privileged to be engaged by RMIT University to assist them in the development of a comprehensive student and staff mental health and wellbeing strategy. This strategy will enable the university to promote good mental health, and effectively support students and staff experiencing mental health issues and conditions.



Prevention United was also engaged by Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (VACCHO) Inc. to assist them to develop a model for the Centre of Excellence in Social and Emotional Wellbeing. This exciting new initiative stems from a recommendation from the Interim Report of the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health and will enable VACCHO to become a leader in social and emotional wellbeing practice, policy, and research. Importantly, the Centre will help build the capacity of ACCOs to develop and deliver social and emotional wellbeing programs and services that align with what their local communities want and need, and work with local mainstream services to ensure they provide culturally safe services that meet the needs of Aboriginal Victorians. The project is currently underway and due to conclude in late October 2020.

# **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

The background of the page features a large, abstract graphic on the left side. It consists of several overlapping, curved shapes in shades of orange and red, creating a sense of depth and movement. The top left corner is white, and the overall design is clean and modern.

Over the last 12 months, Prevention United has continued to focus on achieving financial sustainability. A summary of our financial position for 2019-2020 is provided below.

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020)

	2020(\$)	2019(\$)
<b>Revenue</b>	648,299	462,674
Consulting fees	(74,557)	(14,934)
Employee benefits expense	(233,322)	(96,625)
Fundraising expenses	(181)	(127)
Insurance	(4,546)	(3,835)
General Office Expenses	(2,641)	(7,331)
Professional Fees	(10,854)	(3,653)
Project subcontractors	(350,980)	(193,305)
Rental Costs	(23,100)	(2,200)
Travel and Accommodation Costs	(3,829)	(2,802)
Other expenses	(7,025)	(4,565)
<b>Total expenses</b>	(711,035)	(329,377)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax</b>	(62,736)	133,297
Income tax expense	0	0
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	(62,736)	133,297
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax	0	0
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	(62,736)	133,297

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

### Assets

<b>Current assets</b>	<b>2020(\$)</b>	<b>2019(\$)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	211,208	213,058
Trade and other receivables	0	13,750
Other financial assets	0	20,520
Other assets	17,836	2,200
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>229,044</b>	<b>249,528</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>229,044</b>	<b>249,528</b>

### Liabilities

#### Current liabilities

Trade and other payables	36,122	20,567
Borrowings	0	15,000
Other financial liabilities	32,575	0
Employee benefits	10,143	1,021
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>78,840</b>	<b>36,588</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>78,840</b>	<b>36,588</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>150,204</b>	<b>212,940</b>

### Equity

Reserves	7,339	37,807
Retained earnings	142,865	175,133
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>150,204</b>	<b>212,940</b>

# PREVENTION UNITED

Joining forces to prevent mental health conditions