Australian BPD Foundation Limited

Advocacy & Support for Borderline Personality Disorder & Complex Trauma



Annual Report 2025 - 2026

Board Directors

Mrs Rita Brown OAM – President
Qualification: B Pharm
Experience: Lived experience as a carer for a person with BPD
Associate Director Lived Experience Workforce and Advocacy

Professor Sathya Rao OAM – Vice President
Qualifications: MBBS, MD, DPM, DNB, FRANZCP
Experience: 30+ years as a psychiatrist

Ms Karen Bailey – Secretary
Qualifications: BA Library & Info Mgt, Grad Dip Bus (Admin Mgt), Cert IV MH Peer Work (Carer) student
Experience: 20+ years as a carer of a person with BPD & 6 years Lived Experience (Carer) Project Officer

Mr Desmund Yew – Treasurer
Qualification: Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)
Experience: 10+ years in industry and public accounting practice

Mrs Estelle Malseed OAM (resigned 2/2/26)
Qualification: BA Diploma Social Studies (Melbourne)
Experience: 60+ years in social work and as a mental health carer

Ms Victoria (Vikki) Ryall (resigned 10/2/26)
Qualifications: Masters in Creative Arts Therapy, Melbourne Institute of Experiential and Creative Arts Therapy (MIECAT), Bachelor of Social Work & Bachelor of Behavioural Sciences.
Experience: 25+ years in Mental Health, Youth and Primary Care

Ms Natasha Swingler
Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Psychological Science
Experience: Lived experience of complex mental illness/distress and lived experience of being diagnosed/labelled with borderline personality disorder. Over a decade working in designated consumer lived experience roles from a consumer/survivor perspective.

Professor Michael Hazelton (deceased)
Qualification: RN BA MA PhD FACMHN
Experience: 45+ years as a registered nurse specialising in mental health nursing, including over 20 years holding senior academic appointments at professorial level

Ms Ann Smith (appointed 29/9/25 (resigned 4/6/26)
Qualifications: Master of Business Administration (International Management), Graduate Diploma Adult Education and Training, Bachelor Applied Science (Advanced Nursing), GAICD.
Experience: 20+ years senior executive experience: Non-executive director of charities with a strategic insight and deep operational understanding of government systems, policy environments, and board governance.

Mr Benjamin Frederik John Kuinisala (appointed 5/10/25 – resigned 17/5/26)
Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (BA), International Relations and Affairs
Experience: Senior executive with over a decade of experience in strategic partnerships, government engagement, technology commercialisation, and communications.

Mr Jesse Phillip Kerrison (appointed 16/1/26 – resigned 23/9/26)
Qualifications: Bachelor of Sport Management; currently studying Master of Public Policy
Experience: 6+ years consulting experience in operating model, organisational design, workforce planning and learning. Lived experience of BPD.

Mrs Claudia Sandra Devlin (appointed 16/1/26)
Qualifications: BA, CPA - fellow member; MBA; Dip in Law; Dip Mental Health; Doctorate in Business Leadership.
Experience: Involved with the NDIS since inception: CEO of a not-for-profit organisation which provides 24/7 disability and mental health supports.

Mr Edward Man Fai Ho (appointed 31/1/26)
Qualifications: BSc, and MComp
Experience: seasoned data science professional working in retail sector with strong knowledge and five years of experience in use of data and AI to help organisation to boost productivity.

Mr Brad Dunn (appointed 4/2/26)
Qualifications: BA In Psychological Sciences; Graduate Diploma of Psychological Sciences Advanced
Experience: 25+ years working in the technology space, working as an executive for publicly listed and private companies. 10+ years Product management and innovation. 10 years Management consultant.

Australian BPD Foundation Limited

Advocacy & Support for Borderline Personality Disorder & Complex Trauma

Mission

To advocate for systemic change and enable a positive culture that supports the recovery and wellbeing of people with BPD (with or without complex trauma) and their family/friends/carers[1].

Purpose

To bring together people with lived experience, carers, health and mental health researchers, clinicians and treatment experts to advocate for people with BPD (with or without complex trauma) to access equitable evidence-based treatment and support wherever and whoever they are.

Values

- **Respect & Inclusion** – focused on bringing together people with lived experience, carers, clinicians, non-clinical workers and researchers to encourage a positive culture around the mental health issue currently known as BPD.
- **Driven** – dedicated to improving the lives of people with BPD and complex trauma.
- **Lived Experience** – listening to and respecting the voices of lived experience in everything we do.
- **Collaboration** – stronger and can achieve more by working in partnership.
- **Integrity** – walk the talk and never forget why we're here.

Vision

People living with borderline personality disorder (BPD)[2], personality difficulties and complex trauma[3] access appropriate and optimistic treatment and support for themselves and their family/friends /carers.

[1] The term 'carers' is used to include family by birth and family of choice/friends/supporters/kin.
[2] In recognition of the unique stigma and discrimination the focus of the Foundation is currently based on what is described in the DSM-5 as 'BPD'
[3] The Foundation chooses to use the terms BPD and complex trauma. We recognise the significant overlap in symptoms surrounding personality difficulties and complex trauma.



Report from the President:

Rita Brown OAM

Welcome

Welcome to the Australian BPD Foundation's Annual Report for 2025-2026.

Preparing this report provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on the year that has been, and on the progress made towards our vision of a community where people living with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and their families are understood, supported, and able to access effective care.

This year has been one of continued advocacy, connection, and collaboration. Together with people with lived experience, carers, clinicians, supporters, and partners, we have worked to challenge stigma, promote evidence-based practice, strengthen community awareness, and advocate for a mental health system that offers hope, dignity, and opportunities for recovery.

While significant challenges remain for many people seeking access to appropriate treatment and support, we remain encouraged by the growing recognition of the importance of lived experience, compassionate care, and recovery-oriented practice. As a volunteer-led organisation, we are grateful for the dedication and generosity of all those who contribute to our mission. This report highlights some of the achievements, partnerships, and initiatives that have shaped our work over the past year.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the diverse lands, waters and communities across Australia on which our work takes place. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to Country, culture, community and kinship, and acknowledge the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also recognise the ongoing impacts of colonisation and historical injustices that continue to affect individuals, families and communities today.

Recognition of Lived and Living Experience

We recognise and honour the people who bring lived and living experience of mental health challenges, recovery, caring and navigating complex systems. We value the expertise that comes from these experiences and acknowledge the vital contribution it makes to shaping more compassionate, responsive and effective services. We thank you for your leadership, wisdom and commitment to positive change.

Governance Updates

The Board experienced several changes during the year, reflecting both the ongoing evolution of the organisation and the valuable contributions of directors who have helped shape our growth and success.

The Board was saddened by the passing of Michael Hazelton during the year. Mike was a valued member of the Board whose commitment, insight and support for the organisation were deeply appreciated. We acknowledge her contribution with gratitude and extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

After many years of dedicated service, Estelle Malseed retired from the Board. As one of our founding directors and long-serving Secretary, she played a pivotal role in establishing and strengthening the organisation's governance foundations. Her practical, solutions-focused approach, unwavering commitment, and genuine ‘can-do’ attitude were instrumental to our success. It is difficult to imagine the organisation being where it is today without her significant contribution, and we extend our heartfelt thanks for the lasting legacy she leaves.

We also acknowledge the retirement of Vikki Ryall, Ann Smith and Ben Kuinisala from the Board during the year. We thank them for their contribution to the organisation and the expertise, guidance and commitment she provided during their tenure.

During the year, we welcomed Brad Dunn to the Board. Bringing extensive experience as a management consultant, Brad has strengthened the Board's expertise in strategy, organisational development and governance. His insights and leadership experience have already contributed positively to Board discussions and future planning.

We also welcomed Jesse Kerrison, who brought both lived experience expertise and significant consulting experience across operating model design, organisational design, workforce planning, and learning and development. While Jesse retired from the Board several months after his appointment due to increasing work commitments, his decision reflected a desire to ensure Board members could contribute fully to the organisation's work. We thank him for his contribution and support during his time with us.

The Board was further strengthened by the appointment of Edward Ho, a data science professional with extensive experience in the retail sector. He brings valuable expertise in data analytics, evidence-informed decision-making and emerging technologies, adding important capability to support the organisation's strategic growth and impact.

We were also pleased to welcome Claudia Devlin to the Board. She brings extensive executive leadership and governance experience, having been involved with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) since its inception and currently serving as CEO of a not-for-profit organisation providing 24/7 disability and mental health support services. Claudia’s combination of financial, legal, mental health and disability sector expertise further strengthens the Board's capacity to provide strategic oversight and support the organisation's continued growth.

Together, these changes reflect the Board's commitment to maintaining a balance of governance, professional, technical and lived experience expertise to support the organisation's continued development and future success.

Through periods of both transition and loss, the Board has remained focused on strengthening governance, guiding strategic priorities and advancing the organisation's mission and impact.

Strategy Day

Our strategy day in April was focused on reviewing our organisational direction, governance and operating model, and establishing a clearer set of priorities to guide the Foundation's work over the coming years.

The discussions were intended to move beyond the day-to-day operational demands of the organisation and consider how we should position ourselves, where we should focus our efforts, and what structures and resources are needed to support our longer-term sustainability.

The key areas of consideration included:

- **Governance and Board operations** – Clarifying the Board's role, responsibilities and accountabilities, reviewing committee and working group structures, and identifying the capabilities required to support effective governance.

- **Purpose and strategic direction** – Reviewing the Foundation's purpose and longer-term positioning, including the balance between advocacy and service delivery. The Board also considered the question of the Foundation's name. Following discussion, the preference was to retain the existing Australian BPD Foundation name rather than pursue a name change at this stage.

- **Revenue and sustainability** – Identifying and prioritising potential revenue streams and determining where the Foundation should direct its fundraising efforts and investment. The discussion considered the importance of developing a more sustainable revenue base that aligns with the Foundation's purpose and longer-term direction.

- **Service delivery and the NDIS** – Exploring the possibility of the foundation becoming a registered NDIS provider as one potential avenue for generating a reliable income stream and expanding the Foundation's service delivery role. This included considering possible service models, the organisation's capacity and capability requirements, and the associated governance, financial and operational implications. This was an initial exploration rather than a commitment to proceed.

- **Strategic priorities and implementation** – Consolidating the discussions into a manageable number of strategic priorities, with agreed responsibilities, timeframes and actions for the following 90 days.

Overall, the day provided an opportunity for the Board to consider the Foundation's future direction, clarify its areas of focus and identify the practical steps required to strengthen its governance, financial sustainability and capacity to deliver on its purpose.

The emphasis was on reaching agreement about direction, priorities and responsibilities, while recognising that some areas, including the potential for NDIS service provision, would require further investigation before decisions could be made about implementation.

Name Change

The question of whether the Foundation should change its name has been considered by the Board over a number of years. There are strong and valid arguments both for retaining the Australian BPD Foundation name and for adopting a name that better reflects the changing understanding of personality disorder and mental distress.

At the strategy day, the Board considered this question as part of its broader discussion about the Foundation's purpose, positioning and future direction. Following discussion, the Board agreed that, for now, the Foundation would retain its current Australian BPD Foundation name and focus on strengthening its purpose and impact.

Our priority is to ensure that everyone experiencing the symptoms and challenges associated with personality disorder and complex trauma can access the treatment and support they need, when and where they need it, in an environment characterised by hope, optimism and the belief that recovery is possible.

This decision does not mean the broader question of our name has been put aside. We recognise that language and understanding continue to evolve, and that any future consideration of a name change would need to be a collaborative process, supported by education and engagement. It would be important that such a change recognises and respects people's experiences, rather than leaving anyone feeling that their diagnosis, identity or journey is being dismissed.

For now, our focus is on ensuring that the Foundation's work, advocacy and public profile reflect the breadth of people we exist to support.

NDIS

As the Australian BPD Foundation looks toward the future, the Board has made the important strategic decision *to progress the Foundation's development as a* ***National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)*** service provider in the coming year. This decision reflects both the growing demand for specialised support for people living with borderline personality disorder and related complex mental health conditions, and the Foundation's commitment to improving access to recovery-oriented, person-centred services across Australia. While the Foundation has historically focused on advocacy, education, awareness, and capacity building, the increasing number of individuals and families seeking direct assistance has highlighted an opportunity to extend our impact through service delivery.

The transition toward becoming a NDIS provider represents a natural evolution of the Foundation's mission. Many people with BPD experience significant functional impairments that affect daily living, social participation, employment, education, and community engagement. Despite this, individuals with complex emotional and psychosocial needs often encounter barriers in accessing appropriately skilled and responsive supports. The Foundation believes there is a significant opportunity to contribute to a more inclusive and effective support system by delivering services informed by lived experience, evidence-based practice, trauma-informed care, and a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by people living with BPD.

Throughout the coming year, the Foundation will undertake the necessary planning, governance, quality assurance, workforce development, and compliance activities required to establish sustainable NDIS service delivery capabilities. This work will include strengthening organisational

systems, exploring partnerships, developing specialised support models, and ensuring alignment with the NDIS Practice Standards and broader regulatory requirements. Importantly, this expansion will be carefully managed to ensure that the Foundation's existing advocacy, education, and awareness activities remain central to its purpose.

This strategic initiative represents an exciting milestone in the Foundation's development. By broadening its role from advocacy and education into direct support provision, the Australian BPD Foundation aims to create new pathways for people living with BPD and their families to access meaningful supports, build capacity, enhance wellbeing, and participate more fully in their communities. The Board is confident that this direction will strengthen the Foundation's ability to fulfill its mission and deliver lasting positive outcomes for the people it serves.

Claudia Devlin
NDIS working group

Training and Education

Over the past year, the Clinical Training Committee has considered how the Foundation can best support the people and organisations who work with those affected by borderline personality disorder. Given our limited resources, we have chosen to focus on general training delivered as short workshops of one to two hours, designed to suit smaller organisations in a 'lunch and learn' format. The committee is currently working through pricing for these sessions.

Our plan is to run a first workshop as a pilot once some other pressing event commitments have been addressed. The pilot will test whether we can successfully market the offering, engage our community, deliver the session and learn from the experience. If it succeeds, it will guide how we continue to deliver training, whether to similar organisations or to new audiences, in the year ahead.

Brad Dunn
Clinical Training Committee

Technology and Cybersecurity

During the year, the Foundation progressed work on a ***Technology and Cybersecurity Roadmap*** to strengthen its digital infrastructure, improve information management and address emerging cybersecurity risks. Developed through the Technology and Cyber Subcommittee, the proposed two-year roadmap identifies five key areas of focus: operations and infrastructure, cyber governance, stakeholder and communications systems, AI enablement, and digital health.

An important initial priority has been establishing more consistent and secure systems for Board operations, including migration to *Google Workspace*, centralised document storage, multi-factor authentication and the development of a baseline cybersecurity policy. Looking ahead, the roadmap also identifies opportunities to improve stakeholder management and communications through CRM systems, strengthen cyber risk oversight, and develop a considered approach to the use of artificial intelligence in mental health advocacy and support.

This work recognises the importance of building appropriate digital capability, protecting the information entrusted to the Foundation and ensuring that technology supports its organisational objectives and future sustainability.

Advocacy and Sector Engagement

This year, the Board's focus has been on building the organisational capacity, governance and internal procedures needed to support the Foundation's longer-term sustainability and growth. While this has required considerable attention and effort, our advocacy work has continued, with the Foundation taking opportunities to raise awareness, contribute to sector discussions and advocate for improved understanding, treatment and support for people living with BPD, personality disorder and complex trauma, and their families and carers.

We have also continued to develop relationships across the mental health, academic, advocacy and community sectors, recognising the importance of collaboration and a collective approach to influencing change. Throughout the year, the Board has sought to balance the work of consolidating the organisation with maintaining our commitment to community engagement and national advocacy.

Conferences, Events and Education

The Foundation successfully planned and delivered a range of educational, awareness and professional engagement activities throughout the year.

Highlights included:

- **Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders 20th International Conference** – The Foundation was proud to participate in Wollongong for the theme ***'Creating Relationships that Matter'***. The conference brought together leading researchers, clinicians and lived experience advocates from Australia and overseas to advance knowledge and practice in the personality disorder field. Foundation Chair, Rita Brown was invited to deliver keynote presentations at both the Lived Experience Day and the Scientific Congress, reflecting the growing recognition of lived experience leadership in research, education and service reform. The Foundation also hosted a display table, providing an opportunity to showcase our resources, raise awareness of our work, and connect with delegates from across the mental health sector.
- **Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy (AACBT) Conference** – Rita was invited to participate in a panel in Melbourne, contributing her lived experience and advocacy perspectives in line with the theme ***'Evolving Practice: Curiosity, Context and Connection'*.** We also took the opportunity to showcase our resources.
- **Advanced Pharmacy Australia** (formerly the Salaried Hospital Pharmacists Association) delivered a webinar titled ***'Role of Pharmacists in Supporting People Living with Borderline Personality Disorder'***. Two Directors presented, Rita (carer perspective) and Tash (lived experience advocate) drawing on their respective lived experience perspectives. The session explored how pharmacy practice can move beyond traditional gatekeeping approaches towards more relational, person-centred and recovery-oriented care. It provided an opportunity to challenge assumptions, encourage reflection on professional practice and highlight how everyday healthcare interactions can contribute to more supportive and inclusive experiences for people living with personality disorder.

- **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners** – The Foundation's longstanding partnership continued during the year, with the revision of the ***'Borderline Personality Disorder: Diagnosis and Management in General Practice'*** learning module currently available through the GP Learning platform until 2028.

- **The 2026 Mental Health Nursing Conference** –



The Foundation was represented at the annual conference, this year held in Adelaide from 7-9 October, with the theme '***Celebrating 50 Years of Mental Health Nursing – The Future is Now***'. Our exhibition table attracted considerable interest and was unofficially voted the best table, with its colourful postcards and range of information and resources proving popular with delegates. Conversations throughout the conference highlighted a strong demand for strengths-focused resources and professional training to build understanding of BPD and inform more effective, compassionate and supportive practice. It was encouraging to see the level of interest from mental health professionals in accessing practical resources to support people living with BPD. We extend our thanks to *BPD Collaborative* for supporting the Foundation during the conference and sharing local knowledge of services and resources available in South Australia.

- **Lifeline Crisis Support** – The Foundation delivered an education session for Lifeline crisis support volunteers titled '***Holding Both Sides of the Line: Lived Experience and Carer Insights for Supporting People Living with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)'***. The presentation uniquely integrated consumer and carer perspectives throughout, highlighting both the experiences of a person living with BPD in moments of distress and the observations of those supporting them over time. This approach helped participants develop a more nuanced understanding of BPD and practical strategies for responding with empathy, validation and hope.

  The session was very well received, with participants actively engaging in discussion and asking thoughtful questions about supporting help-seekers living with BPD. Its impact was demonstrated immediately when, later that same evening, a crisis supporter was able to apply the knowledge gained during the training to provide appropriate referrals and support to a help-seeker living with BPD. The individual reportedly shared that it was the first time they had felt genuinely understood and supported. This outcome reinforces the value of lived experience-led education in building confidence, reducing stigma and improving responses for people experiencing mental health distress.

Fay Fuller Foundation Discovery Grant

During the year, the Australian BPD Foundation submitted an Expression of Interest to the *Fay Fuller Foundation* Discovery Grants Program. Discovery Grants support organisations to test and develop preventative approaches that strengthen mental health and the conditions for wellbeing through community-led learning, reflection and adaptation. Our proposal focused on engaging with the South Australian carer community supporting people living with borderline personality disorder (BPD) to identify opportunities to strengthen carer wellbeing, support networks and preventative approaches to mental health.

We were delighted to be one of only nine organisations invited to progress from the Expression of Interest stage and submit a full proposal. While our application was ultimately unsuccessful, feedback indicated that it was viewed very positively and considered a strong proposal.

Research

The Foundation strengthened its commitment to lived experience informed research through several significant initiatives.

- **UNSW Impact Maker Grant** – The Foundation partnered with researchers from the *University of New South Wales* (UNSW) through a funded research collaboration focused on improving understanding and outcomes for people affected by BPD. The project received grant funding and progressed through data collection and analysis during the year.

- **National Lived Experience Survey** – This year, the Foundation collaborated with *Lived Experience Australia* (LEA) and *Flinders University* (SA) on a third round of two landmark surveys first conducted in 2011 and repeated in 2017: ***'Experiences of consumers with a diagnosis of BPD'*** and **'Experiences of carers supporting a person living with BPD'**. Much has shifted since the surveys were last run. Updates to evidence-based clinical guidelines have reshaped how BPD is understood, diagnosed and treated, and mental health services and supports have evolved, with new services such as Medicare Mental Health Centres and a growing number of lived experience peer work roles. The 2026 surveys have been revised to reflect these changes. The surveys went live on the 1st October and close on the 16th November. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this work.

Publication

This year saw the publication of a *proposed Australian Model of Care for BPD*, developed with Spectrum and informed by the lived experience of our members. We sincerely thank everyone who contributed their time and insights.The Model sets out a staged approach that matches intensity of treatment to individual need, supported by a Core Competency Framework developed under our National Training Strategy. The framework equips clinicians across all sectors to deliver evidence-based care. Its aim is that people with BPD can receive timely, compassionate and effective support wherever they first seek help.

Proposal for an Australian Model of Care providing accessible treatments for people living with borderline personality disorder is available for download at https://doi.org/10.1177/10398562261496091


Healthcare policy research paper

AUSTRALASIAN PSYCHIATRY

Proposal for an Australian Model of Care providing accessible treatments for people living with borderline personality disorder

Sage

Sathya Rao · Spectrum Personality Disorder and Complex Trauma Service, Richmond, VIC, Australia; Personality Disorder & Complex Trauma Research and Innovation Centre, Richmond, VIC, Australia; and School of Clinical Sciences, Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

Rita Brown, Cathryn Pilcher, and Marianne Weddell · Spectrum Personality Disorder and Complex Trauma Service, Richmond, VIC, Australia; and Eastern Health Clinical School, Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

Jillian H. Broadbear · Spectrum Personality Disorder and Complex Trauma Service, Richmond, VIC, Australia; Personality Disorder & Complex Trauma Research and Innovation Centre, Richmond, VIC, Australia; and Eastern Health Clinical School, Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

Abstract

Objectives: To define a comprehensive model of care that improves accessibility of treatments across primary, private and public mental health care sectors for people with borderline personality disorder (BPD) in Australia.

Methods: This Model describes a staged/tiered approach utilising brief, short- and long-term psychological treatments in individual or group therapy settings. These treatments utilise generalists (common factors) and specialist approaches, enhancing the capacity of healthcare providers to offer care, thereby improving access to appropriate evidence-based psychological treatments.

Findings: People experiencing milder symptoms of BPD may benefit from brief treatments employing a generalist psychotherapy approach. People with moderate to severe BPD may benefit from generalist/specialist approaches within the private and public sectors. People experiencing complex and high-risk BPD may require longer-term specialist psychotherapy and multidisciplinary care. Treatment type and duration should be tailored to the person's presentation and needs, with clear pathways for escalation of care when required.

Conclusions: This model of care proposes that psychological treatment be delivered at a level and within a timeframe appropriate to each person's needs and proximal to where they live. A Core Competency Framework, based on evidence-based common factors psychological treatment, can facilitate delivery of these services in a holistic, equitable, and streamlined manner.

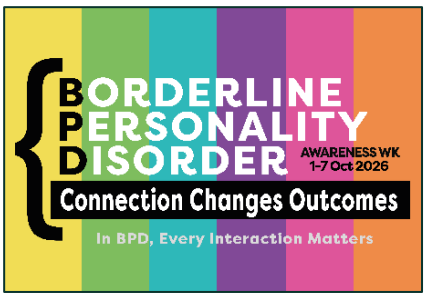
Keywords: borderline personality disorder, model of care, psychotherapy, common treatment factors, mental health system

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a complex mental illness that affects an estimated 2% of the community.[1] A diagnosis of BPD is associated with significant morbidity and mortality, with an estimated 20-year reduction in life-expectancy.[2] Having BPD contributes to up to 10% of all suicides for all reasons.[3] In our earlier study, we reported that 99% of people with a BPD diagnosis who died by suicide sought care from the health system during the previous 12 months.[3] An estimated 20% of psychiatric hospitalisations and 11% of community mental health services are utilised by people with BPD.[4,5] In primary care settings, BPD is present in approximately 6% of consumers.[6] Crisis-driven presentations to emergency services are common, with a small proportion of people with BPD repeatedly presenting to emergency departments.[7] These data clearly demonstrate that people with BPD actively engage in help-seeking behaviours. However, service contacts that do not

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BPD Awareness Week 2026

'Connection Changes Outcomes: In BPD, Every Interaction Matters'

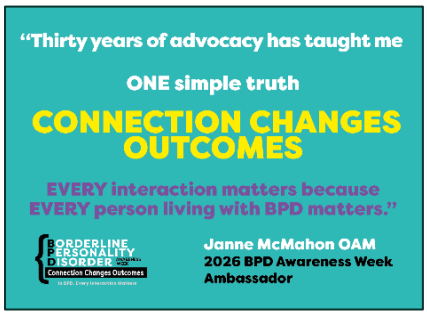


One of the Foundation's most significant achievements during 2026 was the development and promotion of **BPD Awareness Week**, built around the theme: *'Connection Changes Outcomes: In BPD, Every Interaction Matters'*.

The campaign recognised that relationships and human connection play a central role in recovery for people living with BPD. Experiences of stigma, misunderstanding, rejection and invalidation can increase shame, distress and disconnection. In contrast, empathy, safety, consistency and understanding can reduce crisis, strengthen hope and support recovery.

The campaign highlighted a simple but powerful message: small relational moments matter. The language we use, how we listen and our willingness to remain present during difficult moments can profoundly influence outcomes. This message aligned strongly with the Foundation's broader role in promoting more compassionate, evidence-informed and person-centred approaches across Australia's mental health system.

Ambassador



The Foundation was delighted to welcome **Janne McMahon** as BPD Awareness Week Ambassador. Janne is a highly respected Australian mental health advocate and leader in lived experience representation. Since the late 1990s, she has championed the voices of people with lived experience of mental health challenges and their carers.

'Connection changes outcomes. Every interaction, whether with a family member, carer, clinician, friend, employer or policy maker, has the potential to either increase disconnection or strengthen hope, recovery and belonging.'
Janne's BPD Awareness Week Ambassador video may be viewed at https://www.bpdawareness.com.au/

We are pleased to announce she has also agreed to present at our AGM.

A Community-wide Call to Action

The campaign encouraged all sectors of the community to play a role in creating environments where recovery is possible.

- **People living with BPD** need others to listen without judgement, remain present during times of distress and recognise their strengths, resilience and humanity rather than defining them by diagnosis or crisis.
- **Families, carers and supporters** need inclusion, empathy, practical assistance and reassurance that relationships can improve over time.
- **Clinicians and service providers** need education, training and organisational support that enables them to deliver the relational, person-centred care they value.

- **Politicians and government leaders** can support improved outcomes through greater awareness, advocacy and investment in services that meet the needs of people living with BPD and those who support them.
- **Policy makers, system leaders and the broader community** were encouraged to recognise that connection, continuity of care and relational safety are not optional extras but essential foundations for effective support and recovery.

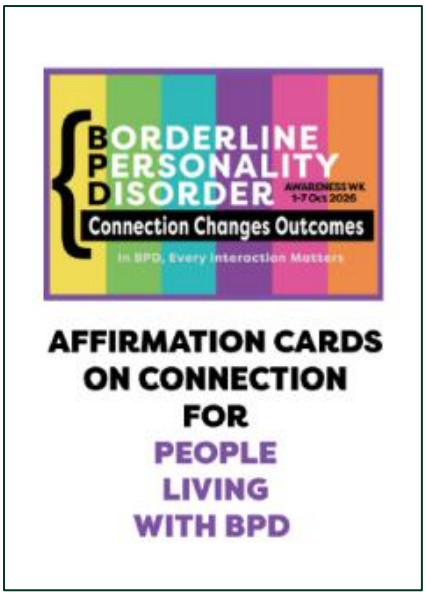
The message reinforces the Foundation's broader mission of connecting lived experience, families, clinicians, researchers and decision-makers to improve understanding, reduce stigma and create more effective responses to BPD across Australia.

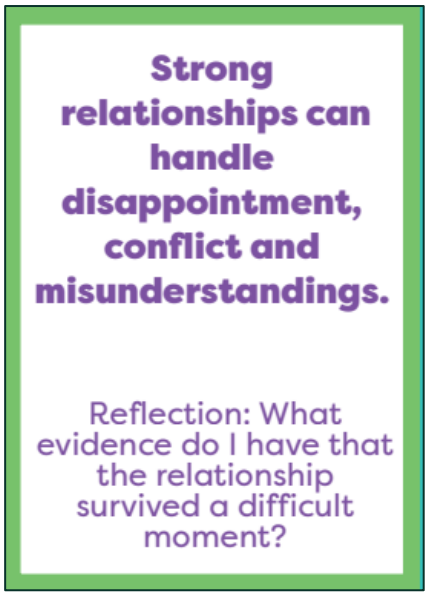
New Resources – Affirmation Cards

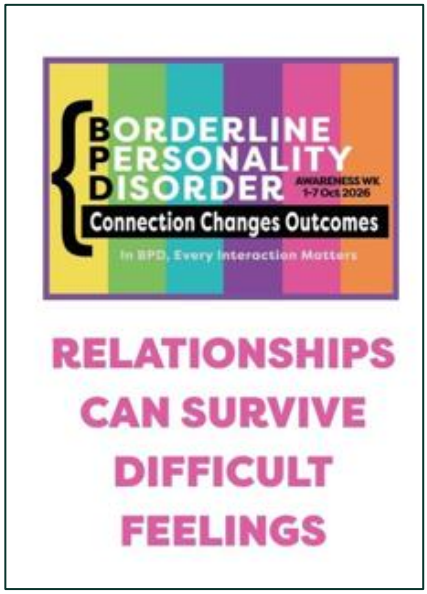
For BPD Awareness Week this year, the Foundation developed three sets of affirmation cards on the theme of connection, grounded in a simple truth – BPD is a disorder of relationships, and relationships can be the healer. Each set is intended as a gentle daily practice. A card can be read each morning, carried throughout the day, and returned to whenever things feel overwhelming or uncertain. The cards were inspired by the ideas and vision of Nat Malcolmson, and we are grateful for her contribution.

1. **For people living with BPD** – offering encouragement, self-compassion and hope, and a reminder that recovery is possible and that their experiences matter.
2. **Family and friends –** supporting them through the anxiety, confusion and grief that can come with caring for someone, as well as the ongoing work of building secure and meaningful relationships.
3. **Professionals** – including therapists, peer workers, nurses, case managers, social workers and teachers, and offers prompts for reflection and connection in complex and often challenging work. It reminds us that connection is not about fixing people, but about meeting them with respect, consistency and hope.

All three sets available for free download from https://www.bpdawareness.com.au/resources/







BPD Awareness Week Events

Many online and in-person events were held across Australia:

- **How to target Self-Harm in Early Detection and Intervention of Personality Disorders**: As the headline event for BPD Awareness Week 2026, the Foundation hosted an international webinar featuring Professor Michael Kaess, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Bern, Switzerland, and a leading expert in self-harm, early intervention and personality disorder in young people. The webinar attracted a broad audience of clinicians, practitioners, researchers and mental health professionals from across Australia and internationally.

  Professor Kaess presented contemporary research on the relationship between self-harm and emerging personality disorder, examining its role in diagnosis, risk assessment, treatment and early intervention. The session provided participants with evidence-informed insights into supporting young people experiencing persistent emotional distress and highlighted important directions for future research and practice. The webinar formed a key component of the Foundation's commitment to increasing awareness, reducing stigma and promoting access to world-leading expertise in the field of personality disorder. To view his presentation: https://youtu.be/lwvKaMZJunY?si=BKeoeDkU-LzV1MwL
- **Restorative Practices and BPD: Restorative Relationship Skills and Emotion Dysregulation**
- **Mindscapes: Art for Healing Exhibition**
- **Beyond the Label: Nellie's Lived Experience of Recovery and Mental Health Services** – webinar
- **Being Enough** – A conversation about perspective, feeling all the emotions at once – all the time, and learning to live with a superpower
- **BPD Awareness Week Free Art Workshops** at the Mount Barker Medicare Mental Health Centre (SA)
- **Connecting with BPD** for people experiencing BPD or other mental ill health & distress
- **Connecting and Caring** for people whose family or loved ones experience BPD and/or other mental ill health & distress
- **Connecting with Clients with BPD** – for clinicians
- **Validation: Understanding the Three Types** hosted by NEABPD Australia

Thank you to all the organisations and individuals who so generously supported the week in some way.

Thank You:

Members, Volunteers and Board Members

The Foundation's work is made possible through the generosity, knowledge and contributions of its members, volunteers and Board members. We thank everyone who has given their time, shared their experience, contributed their skills or supported the organisation throughout the year.

Each contribution, whether large or small, helps sustain the Foundation and strengthen its voice. We are pleased to report that membership reached 1,799 as at 30 June 2026, reflecting the growing community of people who support our work.

Price Gibson Chartered Accountants and Statewide Services

We gratefully acknowledge Price Gibson Chartered Accountants for undertaking the audit of our Annual Financial Report on a pro bono basis.

We also thank Statewide Services (Eastern Health, Victoria) for its ongoing practical support through the provision of office accommodation and incidental printing.

These contributions provide valuable assistance to the Foundation's day-to-day operations.

Donors

We sincerely thank all those who made a financial contribution to the Foundation during 2025–26. Your generosity helps us maintain our work and pursue opportunities to extend our reach and impact.

We recognise and appreciate the trust you place in the Foundation and your willingness to support its work.

To Everyone Who Supports Us

To everyone who has contributed, participated, encouraged or stood alongside the Foundation during the year, thank you. Your support, in its many forms, is valued and helps make our work possible.

"Connection creates hope. Understanding changes lives. Together, we can change the future.'

[Australian BPD Foundation 2026]

Warm regards,

Rita Brown OAM,
Chair and President
Australian BPD Foundation
November 2026