

CELEBRATING
30
YEARS

QUEENSLAND
MENTAL HEALTH AWARDS 2026



NOMINATION PACK



Queensland
Mental Health
Week 2026
Build Community, Build Wellbeing

PART OF **vertaview** group

openmindsTM
Enabling Positive Futures

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The **2026 Queensland Mental Health Awards** recognise and celebrate the achievements of individuals, groups and organisations working diligently to reduce stigma and support and empower those living with mental illness.

The Awards are presented on the Friday of Queensland Mental Health Week each year, this year falling on **Friday 9 October 2026** marking the 30th anniversary of the event.



AWARD CATEGORIES



- + **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AWARD**
- + **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE AWARD**
- + **EARLY YEARS AWARD**
- + **JEFF CHEVERTON INDIVIDUAL AWARD**
- + **JUDE BUGEJA: LIVED EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE AWARD**
- + **LGBTQIA+ AWARD**
- + **NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION AWARD: SMALL (TURNOVER UNDER \$100K)**
- + **NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION AWARD: LARGE (TURNOVER \$100K OR MORE)**
- + **SCHOOLS AWARD: PRIMARY & SECONDARY**
- + **WORKPLACE AWARD: COMMUNITY WELLBEING**
- + **WORKPLACE AWARD: EMPLOYEE WELLBEING**
- + **EARLE DUUS OVERARCHING AWARD****

All winners will receive a prize of \$500, an engraved trophy and a framed certificate.

*The family of the late Jude Bugeja are honoured to offer the prize of \$500 to the winner of this award in memoriam.

**This is the overarching Award given to one of the finalists in the Queensland Mental Health Awards and will be announced during the ceremony. This Award winner will receive \$4000 incentive to continue initiatives and programs.

There is no fee to enter the Awards and you can nominate by **completing the online nomination form** openminds.org.au/queensland-mental-health-awards/

This is your chance to shine a light on the incredible work of the mental health sector. We look forward to receiving your entries. Nominations close **Monday 3 August 2026**.

AWARD CATEGORIES

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AWARD

This category is open to any individual or organisation that through the provision of culturally specific mental health related services, programs, projects or initiatives demonstrates a commitment to improving the lives of Queenslanders who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and living with mental illness, and by promoting social inclusion and participation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life, supports and/or services for people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and live with mental illness.
2. Demonstrates effective collaboration and connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their family and/or carers and other relevant agencies.
3. Delivers culturally focused, best practice services to those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and live with mental illness.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE AWARD

This category is open to any individual or organisation that demonstrates a commitment to improving the life of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Queenslanders living with mental illness. They achieve this through the provision of culturally appropriate mental health related services, programs, projects or initiatives with a focus on social inclusion and participation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life, supports and/or services for people from CALD backgrounds who live with mental illness.
2. Demonstrates effective collaboration and connection with CALD people living with mental illness and other relevant stakeholders i.e. family, carers, other agencies to minimise isolation and create pathways for community integration.
3. Delivers culturally focused services to people from CALD backgrounds who live with mental illness.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

EARLY YEARS AWARD

This category is open to any organisation which focuses on supporting the best start for young Queenslanders (children and/or parents) from conception through to infancy (up to 4 years of age). Programs, workshops, peer supports or services should have a goal of reducing or eliminating the effects of mental illness and a commitment to improving the lives of young people through happier and healthier families.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Demonstrates the provision of child and family support including parenting skills.
2. Provides interventions prior, during and/or following adversity.
3. Enhances the quality of life and wellbeing for young people (up to 4 years) and their families.
4. Demonstrates positive introductions for families to access additional supports for overall health and wellness.



JEFF CHEVERTON INDIVIDUAL AWARD

This category is open to any individual who has made an outstanding contribution to mental health in Queensland and the promotion of social inclusion and participation through their commitment to improving the life of Queenslanders living with mental illness.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Demonstrates respect, compassion and care towards people who live with a mental illness, their families and/or carers.
2. Enhances the quality of life and wellbeing of people who live with mental illness.
3. Promotes social justice and raises mental health awareness in the community.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

JUDE BUGEJA: LIVED EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE AWARD

This category is open to any individual or group who through their lived or living experience with mental illness demonstrates a significant contribution to improving the lives of people with mental illness and their families and/or carers.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life, supports and/or services for people with a mental illness in Queensland.
2. Promotes social justice and raises mental health awareness in the community.
3. Promotes and facilitates consumer and/or carer participation in Queensland.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

LGBTQIA+ AWARD

This category is open to any individual or organisation that promotes social inclusion and participation through the provision of mental health related services, programs, projects or initiatives demonstrating a commitment to improving the life of Queenslanders who identify as LGBTQIA+ and live with mental illness.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life, supports and/or services for people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and live with mental illness.
2. Demonstrates effective collaboration and connection with people who live with mental illness and other relevant stakeholders i.e. family, carers, other agencies.
3. Delivers best practice services to those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and live with mental illness.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.



NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION AWARD: SMALL (TURNOVER UNDER \$100K)

This category is open to small organisations (with an annual turnover of up to \$100K) that deliver mental health-related services, programs, projects, or initiatives. Eligible organisations must demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of life of Queenslanders living with mental illness, as well as promoting social inclusion and community participation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life and wellbeing of people who live with mental illness.
2. Demonstrates effective collaboration and connection with people who live with mental illness and other relevant stakeholders i.e. family, carers, other agencies.
3. Delivers best practice services for people who live with mental illness.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION AWARD: LARGE (TURNOVER \$100K OR MORE)

This category is open to large organisations (with an annual turnover of \$100K or more) that deliver mental health-related services, programs, projects, or initiatives. Eligible organisations must demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of life of Queenslanders living with mental illness, as well as promoting social inclusion and community participation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life and wellbeing of people who live with mental illness.
2. Demonstrates effective collaboration and connection with people who live with mental illness and other relevant stakeholders i.e. family, carers, other agencies.
3. Delivers best practice services for people who live with mental illness.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

SCHOOLS AWARD: PRIMARY & SECONDARY

This category is open to any school who demonstrates a whole-of-school approach to promoting the mental health and wellbeing of their students. Schools do this through creating safe, inclusive and supportive environments that nurture students to develop social and emotional capabilities and to promote positive mental health and wellbeing so they become confident and resilient young people.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Demonstrates effective whole-school approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of students, increase help-seeking, value diversity, reduce stigma and provide clear referral pathways. This includes through events, campaigns, programs and the curriculum.
2. Implements strategies and processes to support early identification and intervention of students who may be at increased risk of developing social and emotional or mental health concerns.
3. Promotes and supports students' social and emotional development, mental health and wellbeing through all school activities.
4. Demonstrates evidence of effectiveness of mental health and wellbeing programs within the school community and provides training to school staff to improve the mental health literacy of all staff and students.

WORKPLACE AWARD: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Open to any Queensland-based organisation which has demonstrated excellence in the promotion of positive mental health, mental health outcomes and inclusion of people living with mental illness for the benefit of its communities. This includes innovative programs, practices or initiatives.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Enhances the quality of life and wellbeing of people who live with mental illness.
2. Promotes social justice and raises mental health awareness in community.
3. Delivers best practice programs to promote positive mental health in community.
4. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.

WORKPLACE AWARD: EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

Open to any Queensland-based organisation which has demonstrated excellence in the promotion of positive mental health to its employees, and supports the inclusion and workplace participation of employees living with mental illness. This includes the implementation of innovative work practices, programs or initiatives.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Promotes social justice and raises mental health awareness in the workplace and wider community.
2. Delivers best practice programs, services or initiatives to promote positive mental health and social inclusion for the benefit of all employees.
3. Demonstrates qualities of leadership, vision and innovation.
4. Demonstrates flexible and appropriate workplace conditions to support equitable access and retention of employment for people with a lived experience to enter, remain and return to work.



EARLE DUUS OVERARCHING AWARD

This Award is presented in recognition of individuals or an organisation making significant contributions to people living with mental illness.

This Award is presented to the highest-scoring finalist across all ten award categories, as determined through the independent judging process.

Winners of the Earle Duus Overarching Award receive a \$4,000 cash prize to help continue their important work in the sector.

This Award is named after philanthropist Earle Duus, who was supported by the Queensland Wattle Day League (now Open Minds) as a young man with an acquired brain injury. Earle left a generous bequest to Open Minds which was the catalyst for the Queensland Mental Health Awards.

Visit openminds.org.au/queensland-mental-health-awards/ to nominate now!

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY



The following conditions of entry apply to all nominations received as part of the 2026 Queensland Mental Health Awards.

ELIGIBILITY

The individual, group, program or organisation must be based in, and be of benefit to residents of Queensland. People and groups from the non-government, government and private sectors are eligible for nomination. **Please note winners of the 2025 awards are not eligible to enter the 2026 awards and the Earle Duus Overarching Award can only be awarded to the same individual, organisation, or initiative once every three years.**

NOMINATION FORM

All submissions must respond to the evaluation criteria in their category on the nomination form. All required fields on the online nomination form must be completed in full and submitted. Only completed nominations submitted on or before the closing date will be accepted.

THE PROCESS

Only entrants applying through the official Awards process and adhering to entry conditions will be judged. All Award nominators are required to complete the official Awards Nomination online process indicating the award category they wish to nominate, a description of the nominee's achievements, and address the evaluation criteria as detailed in this Nomination Pack. A short-list of finalists will be selected from each category. Winners will be announced at the Awards during Queensland Mental Health Week.

CONTENT OF THE AWARDS

All award winners will receive a prize of \$500, framed certificate and a trophy. The winner of the Jude Bugeja Lived Experience Excellence Award will receive the \$500 cash prize thanks to the Bugeja Family. The winner of the Earle Duus Award will receive a \$4,000 cash prize, trophy and certificate. The monetary award given to the winner of the Earle Duus Award comes from bequest funds.

ADMINISTRATION

Open Minds and Vertaview Group staff will manage all aspects of the Awards process during the Awards period. Application information will be kept confidential. All deadlines and closing dates indicated in literature about the Awards may be changed at any time at the discretion of Open Minds. A summary of finalists and winners nominations will be published.

JUDGING PANEL AND DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

Open Minds will convene the Awards Judging Panel. Membership of the Judging Panel is at the discretion of Open Minds.

The judging panel's assessment will be based on the entry submission and the responses to the evaluation criteria of the nominated category.

All decisions within the discretion of the Awards Judging Panel are final and no correspondence shall be entered into. Judges comments will not be made available. The finalists for each category will be announced prior to the Awards ceremony. Winners of each category will remain completely confidential until the Awards ceremony.

Throughout the judging process, all information that has been supplied and submitted for entry into the Awards will be kept strictly confidential and will only be disclosed to the Judging Panel and limited staff of Open Minds, or to promote the Awards finalists and winners.

In the event of a high number of nominations in a single category, the organisers reserve the right to divide judging panels or limit the number of judges per entry to ensure a consistent and meaningful assessment process.

An individual, organisation, or initiative may be nominated in multiple categories; however, they are only eligible to win in one category per year. If selected as the top candidate in more than one category, the judging panel will determine the most appropriate category for recognition.

The Awards Judging Panel can at its discretion bestow the award and its contents on several people or none at all in any given calendar year.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Where a conflict of interest arises, whether actual or perceived, the Judging Panel member may be asked to refrain from judging the particular category, or to provide a proxy.

Panel members must declare any conflict of interest prior to the commencement of the judging process. Participation on the judging panel is voluntary and does not attract a payment for service.

Open Minds proudly hosts and facilitates the Queensland Mental Health Awards. However, to maintain the integrity and impartiality of the awards, Open Minds does not participate in the judging process. Judging is conducted independently by a panel of external experts.

To ensure fairness, nominations involving Open Minds programs, or initiatives are not eligible and will not be considered.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please contact **1300 673 664** or email marcomms@vertaview.org.au



NOMINATE NOW!

[OPENMINDS.ORG.AU](https://openminds.org.au)

NOMINATIONS CLOSE
MONDAY, 3 AUGUST 2026

WE LOOK FORWARD TO
RECEIVING YOUR ENTRY

