

# YOUR SAY

## Mind yourself

**Eve FISHER**



A RECENT survey of general practitioners found psychological problems were the most common cause of patient visits.

More people are visiting their GP to discuss, and be medicated for, their mental anguish over any other medical problems, including colds and flu.

Despite this harrowing statistic no one is taking to the streets to protest the declining state of our collective mental health.

Politicians are not feeling the full force of outrage at the ever-windling mental health care plan visits and rebates.

Hell, no one is even asking why you would need to visit a specially trained psychiatrist to dispense mind-altering drugs when you can pop in to your GP for a bulk-billed session and get your fix from someone whose speciality is the human body, NOT the human mind.

There is no campaign to stem the tide of human suffering as we traverse this increasingly shallow and materialistic world, isolated from our families and in a constantly competitive state with our friends and colleagues.

Everyone is too busy worrying about the world without — Iran, climate, jobs, economy — to spend even the smallest bit of time worrying about the world within.

Yet we have a crisis on our hands and all the RU OK? days in the world aren't going to save us.

Even the new age wellness industry is cashing in on our misery by offering everything from camomile to colonics in a bid to heal our personal malaise.

That said, there is a silver lining. And if you haven't realised it already, we hold the magic bullet.

Only WE can improve our mental health and the time to do that is now.

Holding space for ourselves and taking responsibility for our thoughts and actions might sound too simplistic, but it's the starting point for the lifelong journey into selfhood.

Instead of getting to the root of why we are anxious or depressed, we're told by doctors that it's simply our brain chemistry gone wrong. "Here, take these meds all your life and you will be fine."

Sure, some people have crippling — and life threatening — mental illness, and those medications are stabilising and work wonders, giving them freedom to go about their lives.

But what about the rest? Medicated to the eyeballs for legitimate neuroses borne out of a profoundly sick society.

Of course it's easy to simply take a nice tidy diagnosis from the Diagnostics Statistics Manual, throw in a dash of medication and live under that label all your life, enjoying the idea that the disease model is negating the need to add a human aspect to your healing.

The DSM now has grief listed as a mental condition. Legitimate pain caused by legitimate suffering. But here, take your pill.

Perhaps I sound glib. But

as someone who has experienced depressive episodes since I was seven years old, I'm coming from an informed place. Anxiety took up residence for me as an adult but luckily I've never experienced panic attacks.

Just the thought that an attack can strike at any time must be enough to ramp up generalised anxiety for those poor sufferers. I can understand how popping a pill is seen as the best, and sometimes only, solution.

Sadly though, for many people antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs mask aspects of our inner pain that are simply existential and part of the human condition. Are we not allowed to be sad any more?

Life is challenging. In order to grow we need to explore the darkest depths of our psyches. We need to figure out where we've gone wrong. Our failings. Our fears. Our insecurities. Only we can make our experience right in our mind by looking at it in the first place.

When you look at how we live our lives in virtual reality, it's a big ask to expect people to love themselves truly.

Change comes when you

change your attitude towards yourself. Once you realise that all the drugs and therapy in the world aren't going to help you until you are willing to take responsibility for yourself and your happiness, you will start to get to the crux of your problems.

Look at yourself. Does your own behaviour match your values? How much care and self-love do you give yourself? Or do you simply look for validation from other people?

Look around you. Do the values of the people you spend time with match your own values?

Depression and anxiety are often legitimate responses to this world. Not that we ever get told that. We are told we are sick. Broken.

Eating well, exercising regularly, observing thoughts, meditating and speaking to a counsellor who does more than hand holding may sound too easy, but they come as part of the package on the road to psychological wellness.

Self-love is hard. Discovering your self-worth is work. It takes commitment and dedication, especially in a society that pits us against others every single day.

Knowing your own worth is the very first step. Getting there takes time.

Just know you're worth way more than the 20 minutes it takes to get a bunch of drugs from a professional who is not trained to give you the attention you need but is trained to peddle a "cure" that the medication will never actually provide.

**If you or someone you know needs help, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36.**



### ADDY READERS HAVE THEIR SAY - LETTERS AND TEXTS

#### THE BEST MAN TO LEAD NASA'S MISSION TO MARS

PRESIDENT Trump has announced that "we're going to Mars".

I'm all in favor of that so long as he is actually going and it's only a one-way journey.

**Dennis Fitzgerald, Box Hill**

#### DON'T UNDERESTIMATE CLIMATE STRIKE CROWD

AS a participant in Friday's Climate Strike in Geelong, the first of over 100 events held around Australia, I was puzzled to open Saturday's Addy and see the number of marchers reported as being "more than 1000".

The march filled the centre of Geelong and I have never seen such an enormous public gathering in our town.

I did not, admittedly, count heads but it was agreed among the many people I spoke with afterwards that

the crowd was in the multiple thousands.

I feel the story in the Addy, while prominently placed and featuring an excellent photo of part of the gathering, significantly understated the attendance and I would like this noted, as it will certainly disappoint the passionate and committed young people who organised the march and their many supporters.

**Sarah Carroll, Clifton Springs**

#### KIDS HAVE IT ALL WRONG ON GLOBAL WEATHER

THE ridiculous spectacle of watching schoolchildren protesting about climate change action has to be challenged by all sensible people.

Climate science, extreme weather, global warming etc etc are all a money-grabbing hoax designed to instil fear and loathing into the community.

Using our children to promote this propaganda is tantamount to child abuse. Teachers are responsible for much of this brainwashing and need to be brought into line.

What next? Economic policy mandated by Year 10s? Military deployments issued by ATAR grads?

People need to open their eyes, trust their senses and look outside — the weather is the same as its always been and no child will convince me otherwise.

**B. Van Vriends, Manifold Heights**

#### CATS LEAVE FANS WITH LITTLE SATISFACTION

A FRIEND who was a Hawthorn supporter called Geelong footballers "the Easybeats". Being pre-2007 and compared with Hawthorn, with Geelong's drought between premierships, the name was appropriate.

Since 2012 Geelong has played

well, however they are now seen by their supporters as Rolling Stones fans — as they leave their fans are singing a rendition of the Stones' *I Can't Get No Satisfaction*.

To give merit to all that has happened in a football year gives a right to feel that what has happened is OK. Hunger, praise, did I mention satisfaction can only be met when Geelong realises, before every training session, every club interaction, every game, every possession that only a premiership is truly meaningful and worthy of a team celebration, and that can only happen once a year.

**Ross Kroger, Highton**

#### TEXT TALK

DEAR WAGS. Time to put all your outfit on for the Brownlow night. It's actually not necessary to have your boobs on display to look good.

**Over Exposed**

### Geelong Advertiser EDITORIAL

## Party on but behave

DRIVERS and Grand Final partygoers have been given fair warning.

Police have told them they will be out in force.

Operation Scoreboard starts today ahead of the Grand Final long weekend, which starts with a public holiday on Friday.

It is a statewide crackdown focused on catching drivers affected by drugs and alcohol, and those behaving in other dangerous ways.

Top brass in the Geelong region have promised the operation will have a strong presence here.

There is no acceptable excuse for driving while influenced by drugs or alcohol at any time, but anyone caught this weekend will have committed an act of extreme stupidity.

Grand Final weekend is a great time to relax and socialise with friends, perhaps with a few drinks. With spring in the air, it is often the time when people lift the lids off their barbecues after a long winter hibernation.

In that environment many people find one or two quiet drinks can easily turn into three, four or perhaps more.

So, those who are heading out and about this weekend to watch the game or mark the long weekend in some other fashion should make sensible travel arrangements, and be aware of the risks, including the fact police will be on the prowl.

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1818 - The first transfusion using human blood takes place at Guy's Hospital in London.**

**1974 - Scientists warn that continued use of aerosol sprays will cause ozone depletion.**

**1997 - The British Thrust SuperSonic car sets a new land speed record in Nevada of 714.1 mph (1149.2 km/h).**

**2000 - At the Sydney Olympics, Cathy Freeman takes gold in the women's 400m.**

**2017 - Richmond champion Dustin Martin takes out the 2017 Brownlow Medal with a record-breaking 36 votes.**

### ADDY ONLINE POLL

Yesterday's question: Should Airbnb and Stayz properties be subjected to the same regulations as traditional commercial tourism accommodation providers?

**YES 86% NO 14%**

Register your vote at [geelongadvertiser.com.au](http://geelongadvertiser.com.au)

#### WRITE TO:

POST: PO BOX 91, GEELONG 3220 or [yoursay@geelongadvertiser.com.au](mailto:yoursay@geelongadvertiser.com.au)

Letters should be less than 300 words, carry full name, address and phone number of writer and be signed.

We reserve the right to edit letters.

TEXT ADDY: 0429 839 887 (THAT'S 0429 TEXTUS).

Please include your name and address

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