

# Lifestyle choices keep health all in the mind

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Physical activity and being a volunteer assist mental wellbeing, a new ACT research report has found.

Prepared by the Centre for [Mental Health](#) Research at ANU and the ACT Government Health Directorate, Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT showcases results from the [Personality](#) and Total Health (PATH) Through Life Project.

Professor Kaarin Anstey said the project's researchers had studied residents of Canberra and Queanbeyan over the last 12 years.

“We have looked at mental health in a social and economic context and assessed the psychological and health risk factors as well as the policy and service implications for people experiencing mental health issues,” she said.

A report on the key findings was launched on Thursday by the ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher.

“This report is one of a number of papers that have been produced as part of the study but it is the first one that looks at the totality of the findings,” Professor Anstey said.

“The value in this particular paper is that it shows the complexity of factors that contribute to mental health and wellbeing, and it demonstrates that to have a healthy society you need to consider these factors together.

“The research illustrates that a comprehensive approach to mental health is needed with integrated services that address physical health, medical conditions, lifestyle and other factors.

“The partnership with ACT Health means that our research is conducted in a way that is more engaged with policy and it can be immediately translated to changes that benefit the community.”

Provided by Australian National University

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